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THE MIDDLE AGE.

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HISTORY

OF

WESLEYAN METHODISM.

VOL. II.

THE MIDDLE AGE.

BY GEORGE SMITH, LL.D., F.A.S.,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY,
OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE, ETC., ETC.

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TO

THE REVEREND FRANCIS A. WEST,

PRESIDENT OF THE WESLEYAN CONFERENCE, 1857–8,

THIS SECOND VOLUME OF

THE HISTORY OF WESLEYAN METHODISM

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

Inscribed,

AS A PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF RESPECT

FOR THE HIGH OFFICE WHICH HE SO HONOURABLY HOLDS,

AND OF SINCERE APPRECIATION OF THE

TALENTS AND VIRTUES

DISPLAYED IN HIS

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CHARACTER;

BY

THE AUTHOR.

Drew, 11-25-57

332871

PREFACE.

In presenting the second volume of the "History of Methodism" to the Connexion and the public, the Author does not feel called on to introduce it with any lengthened address. Grateful for the flattering manner in which the first volume was received, he humbly hopes that this will be no less favoured.

He deeply regrets having had to investigate the troubles and collisions which followed the death of Wesley. They could not, however, be avoided, and he has not shrunk from his duty, but prosecuted the inquiry in all candour and honesty. Conscious that he has not "set down aught in malice," if any sentiment, or form of expression, in these pages, is calculated to wound the feelings of any surviving friends of the pious dead, he will most sincerely regret it. But, whilst exercising every care, the Author felt bound to present a full exhibition of this part of Methodist history, and to give his judgment without reserve.

Of the work generally he has little to say. In the narrative part, he has selected those facts which he thought best adapted to show the working of the system, and he has paid special attention to those circumstances which stand more particularly connected with the public character, action, and progress of the Connexion.

In acknowledging the kindness of his friends, he may

observe, that the ministers and gentlemen named in the Preface to the former volume have continued their very efficient aid, for which he begs them again to accept his best thanks. To that list he must now add the names of the Rev. F. A. West, President of the Conference, and the Rev. George Taylor, of Leeds; to whom his grateful acknowledgments are also made for their valuable assistance. He feels bound, however, to tender special thanks to the Rev. James H. Rigg, of Stockport, for the loan of a great number of valuable printed and MS. documents, of the most essential importance to this portion of the History; and also to Dr. Sandwith, of Hull, for a similar loan.

To prevent any misconception, the Author feels bound to add, that he has invariably acted on his own judgment in the use of all materials, and in regard to the suggestions of his friends. The work is, therefore, as was said of the first volume, entirely his own; and no one else is responsible for a single sentiment or statement contained in it. It exhibits a continuance of his efforts to elucidate the History of Wesleyan Methodism, by presenting what is intended to be "a brief but full, a friendly but faithful, narrative" of its progress during the "Middle Age" of its existence.

The promise of a second volume, at the close of the Preface to the first, was regarded by some as intimating that with it the Author intended to close his labours. That was never his intention, although, with the great uncertainty of health and life before him, he did not feel at liberty in his intimation to go beyond what he was likely to accomplish in one year. He intended, should it please Providence to spare his life, to close the work in three volumes, bringing down the History to

some not very remote period, so that the third volume may present a view of the Wesleyan Methodism of modern times. The concluding portion will be prepared with all convenient dispatch, although it is feared it may take longer time than has been required for the present volume.

TREVU, CAMBORNE,
May 27th, 1858.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The demand for a Second Edition has led to a very careful review of the volume, and the Author hopes it is now presented in a greatly improved and much more attractive form.

Although the size of the book is but slightly increased, and none of the information it originally contained is omitted, about seventy pages of entirely new matter have been introduced. These contain numerous notices of deceased preachers, accounts of the Conferences, and various other important connexional information. The requisite space has been obtained by a very rigid revision of the entire contents of the volume, and by transferring numerous documents, and such other matter as cumbered the text of the narrative, to the notes.

The Author has pleasure in acknowledging his obligation to the Rev. John Bedford, of Manchester, for the loan of valuable books and documents, which have been of great service in the revision of this volume, and in the preparation of the concluding portion of Wesleyan Methodist History. The third volume, which is out of print, is also passing in a revised form through the press, and will be ready in about two months, with its copious Indices adapted to the Second Edition of the whole work.

Trevu, Camborne,
March 27th, 1862.

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HISTORY

OF

WESLEYAN METHODISM.

BOOK IV.

THE DEVELOPEMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF WESLEYAN METHODIST POLITY.

INTRODUCTION.

Our preceding researches have fully established the fact, that Methodism, throughout the lifetime of Wesley, mainly consisted in a series of efforts to evangelize the benighted nominal Christians of our country, and to lead them to the experience of inward godliness, and the practice of outward holiness. All that Wesley did in the way of organization, was designed, not to work out any preconceived plan, or to establish any particular system, but to save souls from the guilt aud power of sin, and to train them for heaven.

Methodism during Wesley's life.

This being the case, it cannot be any cause of wonder, that his death rendered very important changes necessary. As neither the formation of a sect, nor the establishment of a particular polity, was his ruling object, so he seldom made arrangements beyond what successive exigencies, as they arose, required; while he continued to act as the Founder, Father, and ruling head of the whole Body. By

Necessity for change in the system after his death.

bequeathing to the ministers constituting the "legal Hundred," the power of appointing preachers to the Methodist chapels, and leaving his dying charge with them, that they should in no way on that account assume distinction or authority over their Brethren, he undoubtedly constituted the ministers the permanent and supreme authority in Methodism. But he made no provision for supplying that continual and unwearied oversight which he had exercised over the Connexion from the beginning. During the later years of his life, when the increasing magnitude of the work, and his failing strength, rendered him unequal to the full exercise of this supervision, the work was done to a great extent in his name, and by his authority, through a few of the preachers in whom he had confidence. By his death therefore there arose, not only a great and urgent want, but a want in the highest sphere,—a want which no man in the Connexion could individually supply.

Further causes of developement.

There were also other elements in Methodism which rendered progressive changes certain. Here we find a numerous body of pious and devoted men, who, while standing in the presence of Wesley, and regarding him under God as their father and their head, were content to be considered as lay-preachers; yet these men knew by indubitable evidence, that they were as really and truly scriptural ministers as any men in Christendom. Methodism contained hundreds of congregations and Societies, comprising great numbers of men and women, well instructed in every Christian doctrine and duty, walking daily in the experience of the divine favour, and in the practice of all Christian virtue. Yet although these Societies were clearly entitled to rank as Christian churches, and were actually in possession of every other essential of

Christian communion, they were not permitted to receive, from the hands of their own preachers, those sacred ordinances which form the most scriptural and distinctive privilege of the Church of Christ.

These, and other circumstances which might be named, clearly showed that Methodism was, by the death of Wesley, placed in a position which rendered change, or rather developement, necessary. So evident was this fact to thoughtful people, that the question was frequently and anxiously discussed, whether it was possible, in the presence of such conflicting influences, to maintain the integrity of the Connexion. Those who entertained such fears did not correctly estimate the strength of the bonds which held the Societies together. Not only were the members, almost without exception, of one mind as to the great doctrine of universal redemption, and other important theological opinions; they were also knit together by substantial identity of Christian experience and sympathy, and by mutual religious intercourse and communion, to an extent unknown in any religious body of equal numbers in modern times.

These rendered more potent by the character of the Society.

But while the coherence of the Methodist Societies was so great, their disposition and power to work out the completion of the system were no less remarkable. They generally possessed the vigorous energy of spiritual life, combined with much earnestness and zeal, and considerable ability to express their views and to advocate their opinions. The constant practice of verbal intercommunication in their social and public religious meetings tended greatly to cultivate and promote this ability.

When, therefore, the character and circumstances of the Methodists of this period are duly considered, and the nature and number of the changes which were required to

remove manifest defects, and to give to the preachers and people a real practicable religious economy, it is difficult to conceive of any community which contained within itself such mighty motives to action, such living seeds of developement, as the Methodist Societies of that day. Instinct with vital religious power, they required the removal of every restriction on their Christian progress, and the benefit of every religious privilege. And, although not schooled in ecclesiastical law, or well versed in the disputed points of church discipline, they felt the stirring of a power within, sufficient to carry them onward to the attainment of all they required. This, it must be confessed, on some occasions, led them to rash and improper action; but it was more frequently restrained by godly caution, and withheld by prudential motives; so that several years elapsed before the requisite changes were fully effected.

The principle of Methodist developement arose out of the operation of a divine purpose.

It has been usual for those who do not understand Methodism, or who misrepresent it, to speak of these changes as arising out of the selfishness or ambition of the preachers, acting on the mistaken attachment of the people, who, it is alleged, were defeated and deluded in those arrangements. A careful and just investigation of the subject will lead to a very different conclusion. This course will clearly exhibit the principle of this developement, and trace the potent energy that urged the Connexion onward, despite of continually recurring obstacles and opposition. We have before asserted, and again assert, that no rational account can be given of the continued growth of Methodism during the whole life of its Founder, and of its subsequent condition and extent, without distinctly recognising the providential appointment of God, and the gracious

results of His fostering care. But did the providential purpose of God, as regarded this work, terminate when Wesley was laid in the tomb? Was this fostering care of His gracious Spirit then withdrawn? According to innumerable declarations issuing from high places, so it should have been. Methodism, we are told, had then done its work,—had filled up its vocation. It had "roused a slumbering Church and nation to a sense of God and religion," and consequently ought no longer to have pursued a course of ecclesiastical irregularity, but its preachers and people should have returned to the bosom of that Church from which it had been partially separated. Confidently as this has been urged, we are bound to ask, Was this the purpose and design of the great Head of the Church respecting Methodism? No man who has carefully and candidly studied the history of the Connexion during the seven years which followed the death of Wesley, will hesitate a moment in answering this question in the negative. Never, in the previous history of the body, were indications of the guiding and sustaining hand of God more apparent, or more remarkable, than at this time. We have no hesitation in saying, that the leading preachers of the day, had they been ever so strongly disposed, could no more have removed the distinctive and connexional character of Methodism, and have abolished its separate existence, than the Israelites could have returned to Egypt from the wilderness. It only requires a careful and candid consideration of all the circumstances of the case to trace in this portion of Methodist history the hand of God, overruling and directing the way of His people,—sometimes controlling the preferences of preachers, at others rebuking the prejudices of the people,—yet dominantly working, all the while, to increase the stability of

the foundation, and the ultimate enlargement of the superstructure.

In considering the developement of Methodism, we have therefore not merely to take into account the circumstances and character of the preachers and people, but also to recognise the operation of a divine purpose, to rear up and perpetuate a great religious agency as an instrument of aggression on the wickedness and spiritual darkness of the world. This was the mainspring, the motive power, of Wesleyan developement. In the absence of this, by wisdom in counsel, and energy of action, it might have increased in numbers and resources; but this alone enabled the Methodist body, without unity of design, or any settled plan of polity, to remove serious defects from the system, to exhibit a progressive developement of its church character, and a growing religious adaptation of its varied agencies to the necessities of the world.

No systematic action taken to establish an improved polity

Notwithstanding the existence of all these active elements, the death of Wesley called forth no connexional effort to frame an improved ecclesiastical polity, or to give the Methodist Societies a more complete system of church order. The first motion taken in relation to the sacraments was of a conservative character, although further and continued discussion led to important changes. So the earliest efforts made to amend the Methodist polity were principally the exertions of a junior preacher, Alexander Kilham; who, fixing on several very obvious defects in the system as it then stood, and mingling these with many fanciful and extravagant notions of his own, put himself forward, with much violence of language, as an avowed Methodist Reformer, in a manner which defeated his object, and separated him from the Connexion.

Nevertheless, the defective state of Methodist polity, or rather, the hindrances to religious progress which this occasioned, continued to press on the preachers and the people for several years, until, after a long series of controversy and discussion, arrangements were devised which continued the full operation of Wesleyan principles in a manner satisfactory to all parties. A correct acquaintance with the origin, progress, and results of these several controversies is so essential to a knowledge of Methodist history, and even of the Methodist economy, that they have been fully detailed.

The result of this peculiar state of the Connexion.

This, however, has been a work of great difficulty. It was found impossible to give an intelligible account of these subjects in connexion with the facts of the general history. They are, therefore, at the risk of occasional repetition, fully discussed in separate chapters. The first exhibits the controversies and struggles respecting the administration of the sacraments by Methodist preachers; which were terminated by the decision of the Conference of 1795, in the scheme of Methodist law known as the Plan of Pacification. The second relates to the conduct of Mr. Kilham, and the action of the Conference respecting it, which, after a lengthened course, ended in his expulsion from the Connexion in 1796. The third chapter details the demands for an amended disciplinary economy, and the decisions of the Conference respecting them. In dealing with these, the Conference had not merely to regard the intrinsic merits of the allegations made, and the requirements put forth: they were bound by every obligation of fidelity and honour to do this, only so far as they would be enabled, with every concession, to maintain unimpaired the integrity of the connexional principle, and the practice of ministerial

Object and plan of the book.

itinerancy. They appear to have conceded freely and fully, although with great care and deliberation, all they believed could thus be granted, without detriment to these fundamental institutes of Methodism. The concluding chapter of this book is devoted to an inquiry into the scriptural character of the Methodist economy, as it stood after these changes had taken place; and a defence of the claims of the Connexion thenceforth to rank as a united confederation of Christian churches.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE CONTROVERSY RESPECTING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS BY METHODIST PREACHERS, AND ITS ISSUE.

Difference of opinion respecting the sacraments.

THE reader has been already informed that on the death of Wesley in 1791 great diversity of opinion existed among the Methodist people as to the administration of the sacraments by their own preachers.

This difference of opinion was the natural result of conflicting influences which for some time had been acting on the Methodist Societies. Wesley, as his conduct proved, was conscientiously attached to the Church of England, and to the end of his days regarded himself as one of her most devoted sons; and he availed himself of his position to induce his preachers and people to follow his example. It cannot, therefore, excite surprise that, on his removal, there were found among the Methodists strong opinions and feelings in favour of continued adhesion to the National Church. These opinions and feelings were powerfully supported by the sincere affection and reverence with which the Founder of Methodism had been regarded by all his people. Under such influences most of the Methodist preachers and many in the Societies were led to desire the continuance of that course of action into which they had been guided by their Founder. The demand, therefore, for the maintenance of the "Old Plan," as it was called, and for the avoidance of any step tending to more complete separation from the Establishment, was very earnestly and extensively urged.

On the other hand, there were powerful agencies in operation which directly tended to a different issue. By far the greater number of the Methodists of that day had been reared up in Methodist families, or gathered from the world by the ministrations of Methodist preachers. In either case, they would naturally recognise these preachers as their ministers, and feel a strong desire to receive the Christian ordinances at their hands.

Two classes of facts greatly extended and intensified this desire. Many of the clergy of that day were either openly immoral or irreligious, and could not be regarded by pious persons as worthy ministers of Christ; while others, professing high regard and earnest zeal for the Church, denounced the Methodists as schismatics, treated them with cruelty and scorn, and in many instances rudely repelled them from the table of the Lord.

But that which, perhaps more than anything else, gave strength to the desire for having the sacraments in Methodist chapels, was the course taken by Wesley himself in this direction, notwithstanding his sincere and strong endeavours to remain in devoted union with the Established Church. The Founder of Methodism not only ordained preachers to administer the sacraments in America and Scotland,—countries where the Church of England had no jurisdiction,—but actually made a similar arrangement for England itself. The earliest historian of Methodism, who was intimately acquainted not only with the proceedings, but also with the views, of his leader, has narrated this circumstance in a manner which fully explains its object. "Mr. Wesley," he says, "had hitherto ordained ministers only for America and Scotland; but from this period, being assisted by the Rev. James Creighton and the Rev.

Peard Dickenson, presbyters of the Church of England, he set apart for the sacred office, by the imposition of hands and prayer, Messrs. A. Mather, T. Rankin, and H. Moore, without sending them out of England; strongly advising them at the same time, that, according to his example, they should continue united to the Established Church, *so far as the blessed work in which they were engaged would permit.*"* Thus did Wesley distinctly make known his opinion of the paramount importance of maintaining the progress of the work of God, even at the expense of his own devoted attachment to the Establishment. At other times, and by various acts, he showed that he regarded even the most useful form, and the most approved ecclesiastical order, as of small importance, when the work of grace in the salvation of men rendered a modification of them necessary.

Not only, therefore, was "baptism, as well as the burial of the dead, performed by many of the preachers long before the death of Mr. Wesley, and with his consent," † but the Lord's Supper had also been administered. In reply to persons who asserted that "the sacrament had never been given in England by laymen in Mr. Wesley's lifetime," John Murlin says, "Mr. Wesley sent me to the city of Norwich, to a congregation who desired the sacrament; and I both baptized their children and administered the sacrament to the people part of three years; and the preachers who followed me did the same." The following gives a still more decisive account of departure from usual ecclesiastical order under the sanction of Wesley. "Before his" (Wesley's) "death, a great number of places had service in church hours, and several of them the sacrament of

* Myles's "Chronological History," p. 175.

† "Minutes," vol. i., 8vo., p. 299.

the Lord's Supper regularly administered to them. He ordained Mr. Woodhouse, of Owston, near Epworth, and appointed him to preach in his gown and bands, in church hours, and also to administer the sacrament, although he was only a local preacher." He also permitted "Mr. Hanby to administer the ordinances in the Circuits where he laboured," although he had not been ordained. All these facts were generally known, with perhaps many others of a similar kind, and would unite to give encouragement and hope to such as desired the Methodist preachers to perform for their people all the offices scripturally devolving on Christian ministers.

These differences called into active operation by the death of Wesley.

The death of Wesley greatly excited the holders of strong opinions on both sides. Those who were anxious to maintain inviolate a close union with the National Church, felt apprehensive that advantage would be taken of that event to alter the general usage of the Connexion in the administration of the sacraments; while those who desired this change, saw the removal of that which was regarded as the greatest barrier to such an alteration. The deep and general sorrow which Wesley's removal excited placed all these hopes and fears in abeyance for a short time.

The Hull declaration.

The first public demonstration was the issue of a circular from Hull, signed by eighteen laymen, dated, "May 4th, 1791," about two months after the death of Wesley. After condoling with the Connexion on the loss it had sustained, and praying for unity and grace, it expressed a strong determination to adhere to the doctrine and discipline "which our departed Father established among us." It then proceeds: "We are well convinced that the usefulness of the Methodists has been, and will be, greatly increased by their continu-

ance in connexion with the Church of England; and we believe, as did the late Rev. Mr. Wesley, those of them who separate from the Church of England 'will dwindle away into a dry, dull, separate party.' We cannot consent to have the sacraments administered amongst us by the Methodist preachers, nor to have preaching in the Methodist chapel here during the hours of divine service in the church." Of this circular Mr. Pawson says, "The letter from Hull is, I think, a very impertinent, foolish, and ill-timed thing, a thing that they had no sort of business with, and has a direct tendency to do mischief. Some have treated it with the contempt it deserves. Others have returned a very spirited answer to it. But I hear that Mr. Mather approves of it, and has returned a friendly answer. I have wrote him my thoughts of it very freely." *

Followed by other appeals to the Connexion on both sides.

Resolutions to the same effect as the letter from Hull, but still more decided in tone, were adopted at Birmingham, and circulated through the Connexion by the authority of Mr. Benson, the assistant in that Circuit at the time. From Sheffield, also, a similar circular was issued, signed by forty-five of the leading laymen of the Circuit, and countersigned by all the preachers there, attesting that they knew no person in the Circuit who did not entertain the same views.

On the other side, Julius Hardy, on behalf of himself and others at Birmingham, published a circular letter, in which he protested against Mr. Benson's resolutions, deplored the agitation which had been thus begun, and insisted that the Methodists should only be bound to adhere to Scripture. This was followed by another circular, sent from Newcastle-on-Tyne, professing to be a formal

* Pawson's MS. letter to Atmore, "May 17th, 1791."

reply to the "Hull declaration." From this lengthy document we give the following forcible passages: "You brethren at Hull have ministers in the Church, which perhaps exceed all others for piety and uprightness of conduct; but do your *pious* ministers prevent profligate sinners from approaching the altar? Do they resolve they shall not share in the ordinance till they are, at least, reformed in their outward conduct? Are you, brethren, justifiable in eating with such in so sacred an ordinance? Does not the Holy Ghost charge you to come out from among them? Are you not solemnly called to turn away from sinners and loose professors, who have a form, but deny the power of godliness? Does not the apostle forbid our eating in private with a man who is called a brother, who is a fornicator, &c.? And are you clear in sitting down with the worst of sinners at the Lord's Supper?..... Let us ask, Do you not believe, in your heart, your preachers are called of God to the work of the ministry? Have they not gifts for the work, which render them acceptable to most that hear them? Are they not in general men of sound experience and good morality? Do they not give proof of their piety in their life and conversation? Are they not zealous of promoting the glory of God, in your salvation, and in the conversion of all that hear them? Do they not labour night and day for this, preaching publicly, and from house to house? Are you not selected from the world, and, by your own choice, connected with them? Do they not instruct, exhort, encourage, support, build up, warn, reprove, rebuke, censure, suspend, &c., and in every sense watch over your souls as they that must give an account to God for you? Has God given them this power, and called them to no further labours of love for your furtherance in the divine life?

Has God forbidden these men baptizing your children and giving you the sacrament? Can you suppose that your preachers, who are men of piety and ability to minister the word, should be under the necessity of sending you among the ungodly for that ordinance, which is the most sacred in Christianity?" These sentiments were put forth with the signature of William Smith, Wesley's son-in-law, the Circuit and Society stewards of Newcastle, and two of the preachers, Charles Atmore and Joseph Cownley.

Minute of the Conference of 1791 on the subject, variously interpreted.

These various publications were extensively distributed throughout the Connexion; and during the excitement produced by such conflicting influences, the Conference of 1791 was held, when the following minute was recorded: "*Q.* Is it necessary to enter into any engagement in respect to our future plan of economy? *A.* We engage to follow strictly the plan which Mr. Wesley left us." "This answer," as Mr. Myles justly observes, "was variously interpreted, according to the wishes of the two parties already mentioned."* Those who desired Methodism to be kept in close union with the Church, regarded it as a pledge that Wesley's oft expressed determination to do this, would still be maintained. On the other hand, Mr. Pawson, and many other eminent preachers and laymen, said, "Not so; our 'Old Plan' has been to follow the openings of Providence, and to alter and amend the plan, as we saw it needful, in order to be more useful in the hand of God."† Such persons construed the minute in their favour; and hence we find Mr. Hanby, who had been allowed to administer the sacrament in Wesley's lifetime, determined to continue to

* Myles's "Chronological History," p. 205.

† Letter to Atmore, "May 17th, 1791."

do so where the people desired it.* Mr. Atmore declares that, having "solemnly promised upon my knees, before God and His people, that I would give all diligence, not only to preach the word, but to administer the sacraments in the Church of God," he dared not refuse to comply with the earnest wishes of the people, when they desired him to administer the Lord's Supper to them. Mr. Pawson speaks of many preachers who had determined to follow a similar course, adding, "The truth is this: I believe there are many places in different parts of our Connexion where the people will have the sacraments; and if they are refused, they will leave us." † Nor did the zeal of these preachers terminate here. Those who had been ordained by Wesley and other clergymen during his life, united in ordaining their brethren. In this manner, three of the preachers were ordained at the Newcastle District Meeting, and three others at Manchester.

The decision of the Conference of 1792 respecting the sacraments.

But while several of the preachers united with the people in promoting the administration of the sacraments in Methodist chapels, others — indeed, a large majority of them—were decidedly opposed to any innovation. In these circumstances the Conference of 1792 assembled, and the subject of allowing the sacraments to be given by the preachers was brought, as a matter of course, under discussion. Those who were in favour of conceding the boon which so many of the people solicited, pleaded that the urgency of the case was greatly increased by the removal of Wesley, who was accustomed to administer the sacraments to the Societies during his periodical visits to the several localities,—a privilege which was now entirely lost. They also urged that a most

* Pawson's letter, "October 7th, 1791."

† "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1845, p. 214.

unreasonable difference was thus made between the Methodists in London and those in the country; the former having the sacraments regularly administered in their chapels, while the latter were wholly deprived of them, or compelled, at least in very many cases, to receive them at their parish churches from irreligious men. But, on the other hand, some insisted on following the course which Wesley had so earnestly recommended. These differences of opinion in the Conference were strengthened by applications from the people; petitions and remonstrances were received from different parts of the kingdom; the debate grew warm; many feared these disputes would lead to a division in the Connexion; and, when no way of reconciliation presented itself, John Pawson proposed that "for the year" the question should be decided by lot. This was agreed to, and some time was spent in earnest prayer to God for His guidance and blessing. The lot was then drawn by Adam Clarke, who, standing on the table, read it aloud: "You shall not give the sacrament this year." John Valton, who wrote an account of the proceeding, says, "His voice in reading it was like a voice from the clouds. A solemn awe rested on the assembly; and we could say, 'The Lord is here, of a truth.' All were either satisfied, or submitted; and harmony and love returned." *

This decision and the preceding debate led to the adoption of the following minutes:—

"*Q.* What rules shall be made concerning ordinations?

"*A.* 1. No ordination shall take place in the Methodist Connexion without the consent of the Conference first obtained.

"2. If any brother break the above-mentioned rule, by

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1845, p. 217.

ordaining or being ordained without the consent of the Conference previously obtained, the brother so breaking the rule does thereby exclude himself.

"*Q.* What rule shall be made respecting the administration of the Lord's Supper?

"*A.* The Lord's Supper shall not be administered by any person among our Societies in England and Ireland for the ensuing year, on any consideration whatever, except in London."

It is of consequence to observe here, that these measures were not taken with a view to settle the question finally, but rather for the avowed purpose of deferring the settlement until the feverish excitement which then pervaded the Connexion had passed away, and both preachers and people were better prepared for a calm and religious consideration of the matter. Therefore, in prohibiting the administration of the Lord's Supper in any Methodist chapel out of London for one year, no opinion whatever was expressed as to the authority possessed by the preachers for the performance of this ministerial act, nor as to the expediency of complying with the wishes of those who desired it. The decision of the lot, and the prohibition in the minute, were both limited to one year. Much as the preachers were divided in judgment on the general question, they were united in a strong desire "that peace and union might be preserved." In hope of securing this, they submitted the question, as they believed, to the decision of the Lord, by using the lot, and unanimously agreed to abide by the result.* Indeed, the exception in favour of London was made, not because there were clergymen there, for in reference to chapels everywhere else the prohibition extended to these as well as to the Methodist

* See Appendix A.

preachers; but because, the sacraments having been always administered in the chapels of the metropolis, perfect unanimity prevailed on the subject in all the Societies.

Salutary results of this decision.

Whatever may be said of the lot, as a mode of guiding the movements of a religious body in a season of great embarrassment and perplexity, there can be no doubt whatever of the salutary effect of the measure thus adopted. The alienation of feeling, and even bitterness, which these differences of opinion had produced between the preachers and people of the respective parties, were very great. Indeed, the wisest and best among both ministers and laymen could scarcely dare to hope for any solution of the difficulty but by a disastrous division of the United Societies. Those who resisted the introduction of the sacraments were stigmatized as "high Churchmen;" while they who wished to receive the sacred ordinances from their own ministers were denounced as Dissenters, who were unfaithful to the principles of their Founder, and rebels against the essential principles of the "Old Plan" of Methodism.

The suspension, for one year, of any action calculated to give offence, afforded to all parties leisure for calm reflection and prayerful inquiry into the real merits of the case. And there can be no doubt that throughout the Connexion, both among preachers and people, there were great searchings of heart, and a very earnest and general looking to God for direction in the impending decision of this vital question. It is indeed surprising, considering the deep earnestness called forth by a strong desire for the sacrament in several places, that there should have been so general a submission to the decision of Conference. Even while this assembly was debating the question, the Society of the important town of Liverpool was appointing two elders to

administer the sacrament to them, before the arrival of Mr. Taylor, their newly appointed superintendent. The prohibition, therefore, was to them a great disappointment; and also to many in Manchester, and in numerous other Societies.

The suspension of the sacrament did not produce unity of opinion.

The Conference, however, hoped that its decision on the sacramental question would not only afford time for calm and prayerful reflection, but also reconcile or moderate the conflicting views of the people; but its operation was directly the reverse. This decided prohibition greatly encouraged the advocates of the "Old Plan" to hope that it would after a while be made perpetual; while, on the other hand, as it cut off the privilege from many Societies which had previously partially enjoyed it, what had formerly acted as a safety valve was closed, and there was created a deeper sense of want, and a more intense desire for an alteration of the rule. So strong were these feelings on both sides, that the best-informed of the preachers, and many of the people, still regarded a great schism as inevitable. "I am well satisfied," observes Mr. J. Pawson, then president, "that except liberty is given to those preachers and Societies who wish to have the sacrament, we shall have a division both among the preachers and people."* In all probability this apprehension exerted a very salutary influence, and caused the leading men on both sides to listen with readiness to moderate counsels. The District Meetings of Manchester, Halifax, and Leeds, this year passed formal resolutions against violent speeches on the subject. Yet nothing could restrain many of the most eminent and energetic among the ministers from supporting the urgent claims of the people. Adam Clarke, who, although a young man, had raised himself, by his piety, devotedness,

* Letter to Mr. Rodda, dated "Halifax, March 28th, 1793."

and great capacity, to an eminent position among the preachers, boldly declared, "that he was resolved to have liberty of conscience, or go to the ends of the earth for it." And many other preachers were coming to the determination "to administer the sacrament where the people desired it, and to take all consequences."

Serious disagreement between the preachers and trustees at Bristol.

But circumstances which transpired at Bristol this year excited the greatest feeling throughout the Connexion. Soon after the Conference of 1792, Messrs. Bradburn and Roberts conducted the opening services of Portland Street chapel in that city. At the request of some of the trustees, they put on gowns and bands, and read the liturgy, (slightly altered,) in a surplice. This gave great offence to the Rev. William Embury, minister of the parish; and he published a letter to the Methodist preachers, condemnatory of such proceedings. To this publication Mr. Bradburn immediately produced a smart reply. Such a controversy, if confined to these parties, would not have been a very unusual occurrence, or one likely to produce serious consequences. No sooner, however, had Mr. Bradburn's letter appeared, than the trustees of the "Old Room," — the original Methodist chapel in Bristol,—who had from the beginning evinced the greatest anxiety for the maintenance of the "Old Plan," prepared and printed a paper, in which they disavowed all that had been done by the preachers in this matter. Assailed on both sides, Mr. Bradburn retorted by publishing a very spirited and sensible letter, detailing and explaining the whole case. All the other preachers on the Circuit, all the new trustees of Portland chapel, and eighteen of the male leaders, attached their signatures to this letter, testifying their approbation of its

contents. Considering that the trustees of the "Room" were but six in number, this showed pretty clearly the general sense of the Bristol Methodists on the subject. It was very frankly stated that the preachers had assumed these clerical vestments at the request of the trustees, and that, having worn them once, and finding it gave offence to some of the members, they wore them no more. Yet, as these several papers and letters were sent throughout the Connexion, this new dispute tended greatly to increase the disquiet and uneasiness which had previously existed.

The Conference of 1793, and its regulations.

While these conflicting influences were acting on preachers and people, the Conference of 1793 assembled. Of its deliberations Mr. Charles Atmore wrote: "Our Conference began; there appeared a blessed spirit of love amongst us, which I hope is a token for good. On Tuesday our grand debate respecting the sacrament began. I had my fears, but they were disappointed! I had my hopes, but they were exceeded! Never did I more clearly see the gracious interposition of the 'God of peace,' or the manifest defeat of the designs of the sower of discord. The subject was discussed on both sides with great candour and impartiality; great earnestness was evinced, but no undue warmth of spirit. The result was, that we should submit to each other in the fear of God. We therefore resolved, that, in those places where the members of the Society were unanimous in their desire for the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at the hands of their own preachers, it should be granted; and all distinctions between ordained and unordained preachers should cease; and that the being received into full connexion by the Conference, and appointed by them to administer the ordinances, should be considered a suffi-

cient ordination, without the imposition of hands. The preachers who were in favour of these propositions amounted to eighty-six; those who voted against them were forty-eight; so that the measure was carried by a majority of thirty-eight."*

These decisions were placed on the Minutes, and made known to the Societies in a letter, entitled, "An Address to the Members of the Methodist Societies throughout England, from the Conference assembled at Leeds, August 6th, 1793." In this letter, the difficulty in which the Conference was placed between two contending parties is clearly stated; its anxiety to maintain the unity of the body, to remove all ground of contention, and to supply to the members of the Societies who could not receive it elsewhere the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is set forth. It also avers that this measure was forced on the Conference by the people; but that the privilege thus granted to a few did not alter the character of the body, the members of which were exhorted to "continue, as usual, in connexion with the Church of England."†

The following resolutions, bearing on this subject, were also passed at this time, and printed in the Minutes:—

"*Q.* Are there any directions to be given concerning the dress of our preachers?

"*A.* No gowns, cassocks, bands, or surplices, shall be worn by any.

"*Q.* Is any direction to be given respecting titles and distinctions?

"*A.* 1. The title of *Reverend* shall not be used by us toward each other in future.

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine" 1845, p. 221.

† See Appendix B.

"2. The distinction between ordained and unordained preachers shall be dropped."

These not satisfactory to either party.

As might be expected, this decision, although hailed as a great favour by those who desired to have the sacrament administered in the Methodist chapels, did not fully satisfy either party. The zealous advocates of the "Old Plan" saw in it a decisive defeat, and earnestly desired to have the minute rescinded; whilst those who, as they termed it, were struggling for liberty of conscience, found it a very unsatisfactory measure, inasmuch as one individual member among a thousand could prevent the sacrament from being administered to a whole Society, so long as he continued to press his objection. Happily the following year was one of great religious prosperity, and tended in a good degree to turn away the public mind from disputation. And it is likely that the administration of the Lord's Supper itself contributed in no small measure to this prosperity. The following is a remarkable, but by no means a solitary, instance: it is given in Mr. J. Pawson's account of the administration of the sacrament at Liverpool, soon after the Conference of 1793. He says, "The Doctor" (Coke) "gave us the sacrament last Sunday. We had about five hundred people, and a most glorious time it was, as I ever saw. The people were amazingly affected. How many were set at liberty I have not yet heard. It surely was heaven upon earth to perhaps all that were there."*

The rapid spread of the desire for the introduction of the sacraments rendered the following Conference a very exciting one. The wish to enjoy this privilege was not, as previously supposed, confined to a few places. The Societies connected with nearly one hundred chapels

* Pawson's letter to C. Atmore, "Liverpool, October 9th, 1793."

applied to the Conference of 1794, under the provisions of the minute of the preceding year, as unanimously desiring to have this sacred ordinance administered to them by their own preachers.

The minute of 1794 respecting the sacrament.

The progress of these opinions, and other reasons, induced a large number of trustees to assemble at Bristol when this Conference was held. After some delay, a negotiation was opened between these gentlemen and the Conference, which issued in the following enactment: "As the Lord's Supper has not been administered, except where the Society has been unanimous for it, and would not have been contented without it, it is now agreed that the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in future, when the union and concord of the Society can be preserved without it."*

This minute looks like a concession to both parties. For, while it insists upon a desire for the introduction of the sacrament so strong "that the union and concord of the Society" could not be preserved without it, and therefore might be supposed, in some measure, to check its rapid introduction; on the other hand, it removes the necessity for a "unanimous" desire, and therefore affords a majority of a Society the means of obtaining the object of their wishes. Many of the trustees, however, and especially those of the Old Room at Bristol, clearly saw in these successive changes the progress of the views and policy which they had so stoutly, but ineffectually, opposed. They were, therefore, determined to take the first opportunity of boldly and openly resisting the measures they so greatly disliked. And such an opportunity soon offered.

The preachers appointed to Bristol, at this Conference,

* Octavo Minutes, vol. i., p. 299.

Renewed cause of disquiet at Bristol.

were, Joseph Benson, Henry Moore, Richard Rodda, and Thomas Vasey. During the sittings of Conference, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered in Portland chapel. This was repeated the day after the Conference closed, when Mr. Moore took part in the service. Two days afterwards he was served with a legal notice, under the signature of the trustees of the Old Room and Guinea Street chapel, stating that the premises were *bonâ fide* theirs, warning him, at his peril, not to trespass on their property, reminding him that they had not appointed him to preach, and that no other persons had any authority so to do. It was a happy circumstance for the Connexion that this aggression was made on one so well able to repel it as Henry Moore. But it was a very serious case. If the trustees of Bristol could thus, without any trial, inquiry, or even charge, expel from the pulpits a minister whom the Conference had appointed, the trustees of other places might do the same; and then the chapels being held in the absolute power of a few men in each place, the working of Methodism would become impossible.

At first, Mr. Moore thought his proper course would be to retire from the place in which he had been subjected to such indignity. But he was diverted from this intent by the sympathy and support which he received from the Society. "The people hearing, on the same day, of the steps which the trustees had taken, the whole body of the leaders, and the other official men of the Society, went to Mr. Moore, and endeavoured to dissuade him from leaving his post, saying, 'his going would make a greater division in the Society by far than would result from his remaining; for they would stand by him to a man, being determined not to submit to one chapel ruling the whole

Circuit;' adding, 'that the body of the people were likewise resolute upon the same point.'" Thus sustained, Mr. Moore went to the room or chapel in Broadmead in his regular course of duty; and found the trustees in the pulpit. He quietly told them that without disputing their legal power to prevent him officiating, he felt it to be his duty to inform the people of the reasons for his exclusion. Having done this, and read the attorney's letter, signed by the trustees,* he added, "Though they, the trustees, had the power to prevent him from preaching on their premises, yet they had not the power to restrain him from administering the Gospel of the grace of God; and therefore he should immediately proceed up the hill to Portland chapel, where the word of God was not bound. So saying, he turned, and left Broadmead, followed by a great concourse of people to Portland chapel; not twenty individuals remaining to hear the preacher whom the trustees had appointed to preach."

This rupture was soon made known to the Connexion at large by circular letters,—the mode of advertisement then in frequent use. The people in general, without looking narrowly into the merits of this particular case, formed their opinions according to their respective party feelings. Those who professedly adhered to the "Old Plan," prohibiting the sacraments in Methodist chapels, sided with the trustees; while those who desired their introduction supported Mr. Moore. The dissension, which appeared to have been settled, was by these means renewed with greater violence than ever. Even Mr. Benson, the superintendent of Bristol, who arrived to take charge of the Circuit about a fortnight after this occurrence, and was a distinguished

* See Appendix C.

member of what was called the High Church party, united himself with the trustees who had expelled his colleague from their pulpit.

In these painful circumstances, Mr. Moore appealed to his brethren of the District, and a meeting was accordingly summoned. Having carefully examined the whole case, all the preachers present, with the exception of Messrs. Benson, Rodda, and Vasey, came to a resolution approving Mr. Moore's entire conduct in the business. Yet Mr. Benson, and his other two colleagues, not only voted against this, but actually set the authority of the District Meeting at defiance; and persisted in preaching in the pulpits from which their legitimately appointed colleague was excluded. Meanwhile Mr. Moore, acting on the advice of the District Meeting, called in the aid of two or three preachers from other Circuits, and continued preaching in Portland chapel and elsewhere, as he had opportunity. Thus Bristol for that year was virtually worked as two Circuits.

The result of this quarrel in the erection of King Street chapel.

But one great result of this unhappy dispute was the erection of the commodious Ebenezer chapel in King Street, not far from Broadmead. The people, determined to show the few trustees of the Old Room their utter inability to resist the general sense of the Society, projected this erection promptly, and carried on the building with such spirit that it was opened in the course of the year, and virtually superseded the Old Room in Broadmead. It is, however, a happy circumstance, that we need not now give even an abstract of the mass of letters which lie before us, and which were sent through the length and breadth of the land for the purpose of sustaining one or the other of these conflicting parties. In the midst of this contention, and while many even of the preachers thought

the breach too wide to be healed, and consequently looked on a great division of the Connexion as inevitable; the two men who had been brought into the most violent collision, and who had felt more than ordinary temptations to irritation and hostility, were labouring to devise some mode of reconciliation. As early in this Methodistic year as February, 1795, Messrs. Benson, Moore, and Bradburn met by appointment at Kingswood, and after much conversation agreed upon the basis of a plan for removing the cause of these disputes, and reconciling the parties so violently opposed to each other. On the 1st of April they again met in the same place, and made further progress with the plan for pacifying the discontented. Four days afterwards Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore breakfasted with Mr. Benson in Bristol, and conversed together for two hours with the same object.* While zealous in the support of the particular courses which they believed to be most accordant with Scripture and reason, these good men were equally ready to extend the right hand of fellowship to each other, and to unite for the purpose of restoring unity and peace to the Societies.

Messrs. Benson and Moore unite to devise some means of pacification.

While all the measures proposed for the adjustment of existing differences were still in embryo, and the Societies more divided in sentiment respecting the sacraments than at any previous period, the Conference of 1795 assembled. The preachers felt the vast importance of their decisions on the subjects in debate, and the necessity of divine illumination and guidance. They, therefore, most appropriately set apart the first day for fasting and prayer. This course had a very beneficial effect, and the proceedings were opened with feelings suitable to

The Conference of 1795, and its deliberations on the subject.

* Macdonald's "Life of Benson," pp. 274–276.

so great a religious emergency. The first business of importance was the appointment of a Committee charged with the duty of drawing up a plan for removing existing grievances. It was agreed that the number should be nine, to be chosen by ballot. Each preacher had nine slips of paper, on each of which he was required to write a name; and the nine men whose names were found on the greatest number of papers, were elected. The choice of this Committee was very remarkable; for although there must have been a majority on one side or the other, the men chosen were not only the most eminent in the Connexion, but they represented every shade of opinion respecting the matter at issue. They were, Joseph Bradford, (the President,) John Pawson, Alexander Mather, Thomas Coke, William Thompson, Samuel Bradburn, Joseph Benson, Henry Moore, and Adam Clarke.

The Plan of Pacification.

This Committee entered on its task, and produced a plan, which, with the alteration of a single article, the Conference passed unanimously. It was then submitted to the assembled trustees, who approved it by a large majority, adding a few suggestions, which the Conference adopted. As regards that part of this great "Plan of Pacification,"* which relates to the administration of the sacraments, the most important change from previous usage was, that "the sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in any chapel, except the majority of the trustees of that chapel on the one hand, and the majority of the stewards and leaders belonging to that chapel (as the best qualified to give the sense of the people) on the other hand, allow it. Nevertheless, in all cases, the consent of the Conference shall be obtained,

* See Appendix D.

before the Lord's Supper be administered." It was also provided that, wherever "the Lord's Supper has been already peaceably administered, the administration of it shall be continued in future." * Various other regulations were made as to the manner in which the sacraments should be administered, in reference to the burial of the dead, service in church hours, &c.

These arrangements were not only a great improvement on all preceding rules; but they were also found to be almost universally efficient; so that at the ensuing Conference, when the case was reviewed, it appeared that all the complaints which had been made on this matter referred rather to individuals who had departed from the spirit of the rule, than to any defect in the rule itself. The following are the minutes of 1796 bearing on this subject:—

Minutes of 1796.

"*Q.* Have the regulations respecting the sacrament been duly attended to?

"*A.* We have had some complaints on both sides. To remedy which, in future, the Conference agree, 1st. That those Societies which have the sacrament allowed according to the Rules of Pacification, shall have it duly administered; and that if the superintendent will not administer it himself, he shall provide some other preacher who is properly qualified to do it; so that the people may not be deprived of their privilege. 2ndly. That every preacher shall attend with the utmost exactness to that Rule in the Pacification Plan which states, that no preacher shall, directly or indirectly, endeavour to excite any Society to have the Lord's Supper; nor, on the other hand, strive to set any Society against that blessed ordinance; but leave the people everywhere entirely free.

* Minutes, vol. i., p. 322.

"*Q.* Is there any direction necessary as to the admission of communicants to the Lord's Supper?

"*A.* No person shall be suffered, on any pretence, to partake of the Lord's Supper among us, unless he be a member of our Society, or receive a note of admission from the superintendent, which note must be renewed quarterly. And if any stewards, leaders, or trustees refuse to be regulated by this rule, the sacrament shall not be administered where this is the case."* The requirements of the case were so fully met by these provisions, that when at the following Conference it was necessary to add many important regulations for the improvement of the discipline of the body, it was scarcely found requisite to mention the question of the sacraments.

These measures were successful.

It is an important fact, that, notwithstanding the restriction afforded by making the consent of a majority of the trustees necessary to the introduction of the sacrament into any chapel in which it had not been previously administered, so strongly was the religious want of this ordinance felt, that the demand for it steadily increased, until, in a few years, it became general throughout the Connexion.

The demand for the sacrament arose out of a religious necessity.

Having thus succinctly stated the progress and issue of this controversy, two observations appear to be called for. First: The administration of the sacraments throughout the Methodist Societies was occasioned by a deeply felt religious necessity. It was not a political movement, not a sectarian clamour, but a spiritual and godly requirement, which led to this result. Is it said, "This want could have been met by an occasional attendance at the respective parish churches?" This objection was frequently urged at the time with the greatest confidence, and has

* Minutes, vol. i., p. 348.

been often repeated since. We venture, notwithstanding, to put the inquiry, Is it really true? All that a worldling or formalist would desire could thus be obtained. The requirements of the Test and Corporation Acts could be fulfilled in this manner; but could the spiritual needs of a sincere Christian man be met by the reception of the sacrament in the parish churches, considering what was then the character of very many of the clergy? It is true, some Methodists earnestly advocated this course. One in the heat of debate is said to have declared that he would receive the sacrament from the devil; and others strongly urged that the hands of a wicked minister could not corrupt the bread and wine. To this objection, by a Mr. Grey, a Methodist, in a manuscript letter now before us, thus replies: "Who ever thought of their corrupting these? But are there no prayers offered up to God at the sacrament? And did Mr. Grey never read these words in his Bible, 'The prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord?' The man that was born blind can tell him, 'We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth.' Yet Mr. Grey, with all his wisdom, is foolish enough to think that those very prayers which 'are an abomination to the Lord' are as useful to his soul as any others; and that although God heareth not sinners, yet he himself is very well satisfied to hear them, and quite contented although God never returns an answer." However bluntly these sentiments are expressed, they will find an echo in every enlightened heart. The man who desires to approach the table of the Lord in a truly devout spirit, will require at least reasonable proof that he who ministers to him in holy things is a godly person; and it is notorious that the general character of

the established clergy at this time did not afford such evidence. But we are prepared to go further than this, and to say, that a truly Christian man will desire to receive this sacred ordinance from his own minister. For a man to be enlightened, brought to God, and built up in Christian doctrine and experience, by the labours of one minister, and to have no means of receiving the Lord's Supper but from the hands of another person of whose piety he has no proof, is an anomaly which enlightened Christianity will not long endure.

And did not proceed from the preachers, but the people

Our second observation refers to the conduct of the preachers in this case. It has been frequently and loudly asserted, that the change in the Wesleyan economy by which the Methodist people obtained the privilege of receiving the sacraments in their own chapels, was brought about by the studied design and continued efforts of the preachers. No charge ever preferred against public men can be more groundless or unjust. Dr. Adam Clarke, who certainly ought to be regarded as a competent witness, declares, "It is an utter slander to say that the preachers excited the people to clamour for the ordinances, because they wished by it to promote their own honour and interest. I believe not a soul of them dreamed of such a thing." So contrary is this allegation to matter of fact, that there can be no doubt, as already shown, that the majority of the preachers were against the innovation throughout all the early part of the controversy; and, indeed, until the entreaties of the people became so urgent in 1793, that they could no longer be resisted. We accordingly find John Pawson, who was anxious for the concession of the sacrament to the people, and who knew the views and feelings of the preachers of his time as well as any one, lamenting the prevalence of High

Church views among his brethren. After alluding to certain manifestations of feeling in this direction, he observes, "I am heartily sorry to see such a spirit among the preachers."* No candid person can honestly review all the circumstances of the case without coming to the conclusion, that, so far from promoting this change, the preachers resisted it until the progress of discontent had nearly destroyed the peace and greatly endangered the unity of the Connexion.

* MS. letter, "May 22nd, 1792."

CHAPTER II.

THE CONDUCT, TRIALS, AND EXPULSION OF MR. ALEXANDER KILHAM.

Difficulty of placing the subject of this chapter.

We have felt considerable difficulty in the allocation of the subject of this chapter. Its importance demands separate and consecutive record; yet it is so intermixed with the agitations and discussions which led to the changes made in Methodist polity in 1795 and 1797, that it is difficult to adjust the precedence. The present order has been adopted, as most likely to afford a complete and accurate view of the whole subject.

Mr. Kilham officiates as a Methodist preacher.

Alexander Kilham was a native of Epworth, was converted, became a Methodist local preacher, and went to the Norman Isles in the service of Mr. Brackenbury.* He offered himself to Wesley for the work of the ministry in 1785, and was appointed to the Grimsby Circuit, when about twenty-three years of age. Pending his differences with his brethren, and after his expulsion, some rather severe observations were made respecting his humble position in the service of Mr. Brackenbury, and the alleged irregularity in the manner of his introduction into the Methodist ministry. To these remarks Mr. Kilham's friends have attached undue importance, and have evinced unreasonable sensitiveness in repelling them. The truth, perhaps, lies nearly midway between the rival statements; but the matter itself is altogether beside the question, and unworthy of serious notice. Whatever position Mr. Kilham previously occu-

* See vol. i., p. 536.

pied, or by whatever means he was placed before Wesley and the Conference, as a candidate for the ministry, it is an undoubted fact that he was heartily and honourably received; that he entered on the duties of his office as a pious, zealous, and industrious young man; and that he gave early evidence of more than ordinary energy and ability.

Important incident in his early course.

While, however, we are disposed to attach no importance whatever to the allegations above referred to, it is necessary to observe, that one circumstance took place before Mr. Kilham was received by Wesley as a preacher, which probably had more influence on his future course of life than controversialists have perceived, or even he himself was aware. When Mr. Brackenbury went abroad, he left Mr. Kilham at Raithby Hall, with liberty to employ his time as he might think best. It happened just then, that one of the four preachers appointed at the Conference for the Grimsby Circuit (within the limits of which Raithby Hall was situated) did not accept his appointment. Mr. Dufton, the superintendent, therefore entreated Mr. Kilham to supply the vacant place. He did not fully consent, but offered for a while to preach on Sundays, and occasionally to assist in other ways. While thus employed, another of the preachers on the Circuit was taken ill,—an event which rendered the assistance of Mr. Kilham more than ever necessary, and seems to have led him to conclude that, for the present, this was his providential place: he entered on the full work of a Circuit preacher, and continued to discharge its duties until the ensuing Conference. Preaching on one occasion at a place called Skendleby, near Spilsby, he was interrupted by the Rev. Edward Brackenbury, incumbent of the parish, and

brother of R. C. Brackenbury, Esq., who objected to his doctrine, and held him in debate for nearly an hour. As the preacher had the better of the parson in the argument, the latter felt annoyed; and, on consultation with others of the clergy, it was determined, if possible, to prevent the Methodists from preaching in the neighbourhood. He sent a message to Mr. Kilham to this effect; telling him at the same time that, had he not been residing at his brother's house, Raithby Hall, he would at once have sent him to Lincoln Castle. There was but one way of defence against this aggression, and it was by licensing the preacher and the places of worship. The latter was done immediately; and when the Quarter Sessions arrived, Mr. Kilham appeared, and claimed a licence to preach, under the provisions of the Toleration Act. The Rev. Mr. Brackenbury, who was on the bench, urged the refusal of the application: he was, however, informed, that the magistrates had no discretion, but were bound to grant the licence to any applicant willing to take the oaths which the Act prescribes. Foiled in this attempt, Mr. Brackenbury insisted, as was not uncommon at the time, that the privileges of the Act were available only for Dissenters from the Church of England. He then put the question to Mr. Kilham, "Are you a Churchman, or a Dissenter?" Mr. Kilham endeavoured to evade a direct answer, but in vain. We are therefore told, that when "Mr. Kilham was obliged either to give up all thoughts of obtaining a licence, and of preaching any more, or to comply with what the law required, and, without either mitigation or comment, to profess himself to be a Dissenter, he decided upon doing the latter; and having taken the oaths as a Dissenter, he received his licence, and went on preaching at Skendleby,

and elsewhere, as usual."* We are further informed, that Mr. Kilham's notions of consistency were very strict and uncompromising; and "regarding himself as thrust out" of the Church by the intolerant conduct of the clergy at the Quarter Sessions, he said, "From that time I considered myself as a *real Dissenter*." The *italics* are in the narrative from which we quote: and from this emphatic declaration, and the tenor of a long note at the foot of the page, we are led to understand that Mr. Kilham, unlike Baxter, Bates, and others, did not call himself a Dissenter, because he did not in everything conform to the Church; but that, by being a "*real Dissenter*," he meant one wholly alienated from, and opposed to, the National Church Establishment.

Effect of this on Mr. Kilham's mind.

We regard this as a very important consideration. Wesley was above eighty years of age; his removal, therefore, could not be distant. And it was certain, that soon after his death important modifications or developments of the economy of Methodism must take place. The question, therefore, arises, Was Mr. Kilham—young, (for he was not thirty years of age when Wesley died,) ardent, energetic, able, and a real Dissenter—was he likely to take part in the discussions and deliberations which were to arise, and to agree to such arrangements and modifications of the Methodist economy as would be approved by the great body of Methodist preachers? It is freely admitted that many of the Methodists of that day, and not a few of the preachers, had very little sympathy or respect for the Church of England. But it is equally true, that very many had so fully imbibed the spirit which, up to a very late period, regulated on these points the views of their

* "Life of Alexander Kilham." Groombridge. 1838.

Founder, that the separation of Methodism from communion with the Establishment would by them be regarded as the date of its ruin. Were these parties, then, provided their difference of opinion did not divide the Connexion into two rival sects, likely to adopt any middle course, with which a young and ardent Dissenter, like Mr. Kilham, with notions of consistency strict and uncompromising, was likely to accord? We think not. And whatever his friends thought at the time, or his admirers may think now, it is clear to us that, long before the death of Wesley, Mr. Kilham regarded the subject in precisely the same aspect as we do. The following passages, taken from private papers on which he wrote his religious thoughts and feelings for his own use, seem decisive on this point:—"I am resolved," he says, "to continue an itinerant preacher as long as my life and health continue, *provided there be no alteration after Mr. Wesley's death, that shall make it most advisable to desist.*" And again, "God knows my resolution is *to continue in the Connexion while I can do it with a clear conscience.*" Do not these expressions clearly prove that Mr. Kilham saw principles in operation, and changes impending, which would render his continued union with the Body not only unadvisable, but incompatible with his keeping a clear conscience? The issue, therefore, which we shall have to consider, is not one which could only proceed from great unfaithfulness or crime on his part, or great change or tyranny on the part of the authorities of Methodism. On the contrary, there was such difference of judgment between the two parties, that circumstances might at any time arise to sever their connexion, without criminality on either side. Nothing further of any moment bearing on this subject occurred, before the death of Wesley; unless

t may be necessary to mention that, just before that vent, Mr. Kilham's second child was born. One of the leading men in the Whitby Society, who was warmly attached to the Church, wished the child to be baptized by the clergyman. "Mr. Kilham objected on principle, maintaining that, as a Dissenter, it would be inconsistent to have recourse to the Establishment on such an occasion."*

Mr. Kilham's efforts to impress the Connexion with his views.

No sooner, however, had the death of Wesley produced in the Methodist Societies an anxious concern respecting the future polity of the Connexion, than Mr. Kilham earnestly endeavoured to impress them with his views, and to induce them to pursue a corresponding course of action. As mentioned in the last chapter, the famous Hull circular was the first sound of discord and agitation which fell on the ear of the Societies after the founder of Methodism had passed to his reward. Immediately on the appearance of this document, Mr. Kilham wrote a reply to it. But here it is to be noted, that while the Hull circular emanated from a meeting of leaders, local preachers, stewards, and people, many of whom signed their names, Mr. Kilham's reply was issued anonymously; and, to keep the secret of its origin perfectly, it was posted at York, and sent to the Methodists of Newcastle-on-Tyne. The leading men of the Society there adopted this document with some unimportant alterations. Having added a postscript, they had it printed and circulated through the Connexion, as an antidote to that which had issued from Hull. The opening paragraph of this address shows the design of the writer: "Dear Brethren,—We readily acknowledge your good intention in addressing us in the affectionate manner you have done. With you, we bemoan the loss

* "Life of Kilham," p. 122.

of so valuable a man from the head of our Connexion. We wish to follow him in doctrine and discipline, as he followed Christ. Mr. Wesley was always greatly attached to the Establishment; and, in the warmth of his zeal, wrote in defence of his people communicating in the Church. But, since God has called him from us, would it not be advisable for us to enter into an impartial examination of our principles and conduct before we proceed any farther? If Mr. Wesley has left us rules exactly agreeing with the law and the testimony, we should follow them with avidity; but should it be found, on near inspection, that in some things he has been mistaken, (and who is not liable to mistake?) ought we not as soon as possible to lay our mistakes aside? We are called on by an apostle to '*prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good.*' It is for the honour of any person or body of people to renounce error and embrace truth."

It is not intended to dispute the axiom so ingeniously interwoven into this passage, nor to argue at all respecting it, but to call attention to one evident fact:—its scope and design are, to effect an alteration in Methodism as it then was. For this purpose, it is suggested that, as all are liable to mistake, Wesley might be mistaken; that it is the duty of all to test their opinions and practices by the Scriptures; and that, therefore, this examination ought then to take place in Methodism, and every detected error be renounced. So that Mr. Kilham commenced his career as a reformer, by attempting to reform the Methodism of Wesley.

With these views, in the then excited state of the Connexion, Mr. Kilham was soon brought into active exertion, and into trouble. At the Conference of 1791 he was

appointed to labour in the Newcastle Circuit with Mr. Gaulter, who was of the same ministerial standing, under the superintendency of Mr. Cownley, a senior preacher. All these preachers were favourable to the sacraments being administered to the Societies in the Methodist chapels. At Newcastle, however, the trustees and a part of the Society were opposed to this measure; but, as others desired the privilege of receiving the Lord's Supper from their preachers, what was regarded as a middle course was adopted. About two miles from Newcastle, a chapel had been erected by a Mr. Johnson at his own expense; and, as he was quite willing, it was decided that Mr. Cownley, who had been ordained by Wesley, should administer the ordinance at Byker chapel, and afford members of the Society at Newcastle the privilege they sought, without offending the feelings of those opposed to the measure.

A secession at Newcastle leads Mr. Kilham into controversy.

This was done. But, temperate as the step seemed, it gave such great offence, that three class-leaders, and "about twenty members, left the Society." One of these, a Mr. Grey, wrote a letter to Mr. Cownley, in which he condemned his conduct, and reproached him for the course he had taken, in very strong terms. To this Mr. Cownley sent a mild reply. Mr. Grey wrote again; and we are told, by Mr. Kilham's biographer, that Mr. Cownley received this second letter when he had just "returned from a journey much fatigued, and was preparing to go into the country part of the Circuit; and, having neither time nor inclination to reply to it himself, he put the communication unopened into Mr. Kilham's hand, and begged him to write to Mr. Grey in return." * Mr. Kilham did so, and in consequence several letters passed between the parties.

* "Life of Kilham," p. 148.

Not long after this correspondence Mr. Kilham was surprised to learn that Mr. Grey had published it in a pamphlet with a prefatory note, and some remarks of his own. Mr. Kilham, not liking the controversy to close in that manner, soon afterward sent forth "An Address to the Members and Friends of the Methodist Society in Newcastle, 1792." As this was one of the first publications on the vexed question of giving the sacraments in Methodist chapels, it attracted great attention, and was commended by Mr. Pawson and other preachers and lay friends. Yet, notwithstanding their praises, at the Conference of 1792, Mr. Kilham was placed on trial for the production of this piece.*

The following are the passages, taken *verbatim* from Mr. Kilham's tract published in 1792, which were read in the

It was not an uncommon practice at this period for those preachers who had been previously ordained by Wesley to administer the same rite privately to any of the brethren who were willing to receive it at their hands: and, while at Newcastle, Mr. Kilham accepted ordination in this way. The following, taken from the original, is a copy of his "Letter of Orders:"—

"KNOW all men by these presents, that we, Joseph Cownley and Charles Atmore, having been ordained ourselves Elders of the Church of God, by the Rev. John Wesley, and other ordained Ministers, did, on the nineteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two, by the imposition of hands and prayer, and in the fear of God, set apart Alexander Kilham for the office of Elder in the Church of God, whom we recommend to all to whom these presents shall come, as a proper person to administer the holy sacraments, and feed the Church of God. Given under our hands and seals the day and year above written.

"JOS. (L.S.) COWNLEY.

"CHARLES (L.S.) ATMORE."

Some time ago the original document, written on vellum by Mr. Atmore, then stationed at Alnwick, and without any punctuation, came into the hand of the Rev. John Kirk, Wesleyan minister, who presented it to the New-Connexion Conference in 1861. The Conference accepted it, and tendered its warmest acknowledgments.

Conference as the ground of complaint: "We have often been represented as enemies to Mr. Wesley and the interests of Methodism. But this charge is exceeding unjust. We declare in the sight of God, and before all the world, that *his memory* is exceeding dear to us. We are conscious he was much owned of God, and signally blessed to thousands in his labours. But we cannot think Mr. Wesley was infallible. The doctrines essential to salvation he explained and enforced with great judgment and success; and the discipline he established in his Societies is hardly to be equalled in any denomination of Christians in the world. His plan of changing preachers so frequently, has been productive of the happiest effects. But is it reasonable to suppose that Mr. Wesley, amidst so many excellencies, had no infirmities? Shall we consider his determinations as conclusive in every thing, and follow his counsel, without daring to examine it by the word of God? Are we enemies to this great apostolical man, because we think he held *some notions* which are not founded on the Scriptures, and are now desirous of laying them aside? If we were to take every thing he has said, and maintain it with warmth against his opponents, we might be justly reproached as enemies to the character we wish to establish." *

Mr. Kilham's first trial at the Conference of 1792.

A second passage objected to was the following: "Our Connexion has not reached the perfection which is held out to us in the Gospel. Several things must be removed, and others substituted in their place, to bring about the desired end. If *a few bigoted persons who never think for themselves,* call this 'innovation,' every sensible man will highly esteem our conduct." † What follows was the last: "It appears that our being closely united to the Established

* Preface, p. iv.

† *Ibid.*, p. v.

Church is founded on reasons not justifiable from the Scriptures. It is more honourable to attend service at the church than to worship among the Dissenters. It takes away a good deal of the scandal of the cross. It may be advantageous to our business in the world. It may bring us to fill up places in the nation which may be greatly helpful to our families, that we could not occupy were we Dissenters of any denomination. Our being connected so closely with the Church cannot be looked on in any other light than a specious trimming between God and the world. We never met with any arguments for our continuing closely united with the Church but what are political, or, in other words, carnal, and sold under sin." *

He is censured by that body.

We have no reliable account of the manner of his trial. Mr. Kilham's recollections of some of the speeches delivered, a summary of which is published by his biographer, cannot be regarded as impartial or complete, even if we give both the utmost credit for candour and honesty. The result, however, appears to be undoubted. The Conference decided that Mr. Kilham acted imprudently in writing and publishing the pamphlet. The work itself was then condemned, as calculated to spread division and dissension in the Methodist Societies. But on Mr. Kilham's making a very qualified declaration of his regret for having offended the Conference, and given it trouble and pain, it was agreed to receive such confession.

Mr. Kilham's friends exhibit this trial and the censure pronounced on him as a triumph. "Mr. Kilham," they say, "in his cause and conduct, was so manifestly in the right, that there can be little doubt of his having been more satisfied in his conscience with his defeat, than his accusers were with the victory they had gained over him." †

* Page 20.

† "Life," p. 169.

Before we look further, we will do Mr. Kilham the justice to admit that, in our judgment, the question respecting the administration of the sacraments in Methodist chapels was at that period very properly raised; nor have we any doubt that the balance of Christian right and scriptural authority was largely in favour of those who contended, as he did, for the concession of this privilege. Yet we can by no means assent to the above judgment of Mr. Kilham's friends.

Mr. Kilham's conduct shows that this censure was justly merited.

For, although we make this admission in the largest sense, we cannot forget how the Methodist people had been trained up by Wesley in unity with the National Church, and in veneration for her ordinances. And even Mr. Kilham admits that preachers and people thought it their duty to comply with his will while he ruled in our Israel, out of affection to him as their father in the Gospel.* Was it reasonable, then,—was it justifiable,—to refuse to such persons some time for consideration before they changed their opinions?—for their *enlightenment*, if those who advocate Mr. Kilham's views wish to have it so? Were not the devoted adherents of Wesley's principles and practices entitled to considerable forbearance and Christian charity? And surely, if they had a right to demand it from any one, it was from Mr. Kilham. He had entered the Methodist ministry a sworn Dissenter. Admitting his entire conscientiousness, he must have seen that, before the death of Wesley, his principles and views were not precisely those of the Body to which he had become attached. Surely, then, he was not the man to press for an instant change of the system, as soon as Wesley was removed, even before he had been in the grave twelve months. Was he justified in denouncing that

* Preface to Address, p. v.

which had been the distinguishing badge of Methodism throughout the lifetime of its Founder, as a time-serving, mercenary course, which took away much of the scandal of the cross, and for which no arguments had been given but such as were "carnal, sold under sin?"

Further, it appears to us that the language which Mr. Kilham applied to those who held opinions different from himself was very unbecoming. He says, "Several things must be removed, and others substituted in their place, to bring about the desired end. If a few bigoted persons, who never think for themselves, call this 'innovation,'" &c. Mr. Kilham knew very well that Thompson, Benson, Mather, Dr. Coke, and many others, would call the changes which he desired to bring about "innovations." Some of these preachers had borne the burden and heat of the day, labouring for souls, and rearing up the Methodist Societies, before Mr. Kilham was born. Some of them were men of considerable learning and intellectual power. It was not, therefore, in our judgment, decent or right for Mr. Kilham to call such men "bigots, who never think for themselves."

After all that has been said in its defence, we regard the language of Mr. Kilham in the first quoted passage from his Preface, as very reprehensible. He thought Wesley held *some notions* which are not founded on the Scriptures. And we are given to understand that this language must be justified, or it must be believed that Wesley was infallible. It seems that, in his view, there was no medium between two such extremes, no room for doubt; for anything between regarding him as infallible, and proclaiming to the world that he held notions contrary to the word of God! And these *notions*, be it remembered, were not stray opinions respecting indifferent and private matters; but

such as formed the basis of certain parts of the Methodist economy and discipline, or else Mr. Kilham could not desire to "lay them aside." His language is, "Because we think he held some notions which are not founded on the Scriptures, and are now desirous of laying them aside." When Mr. Kilham says he is desirous of laying Wesley's "notions" aside, he must mean some measures or practices which had been founded on these notions. Nor are we to be led away from a just view of the case by the pretence that this is put hypothetically. The hypothesis is, whether Mr. Kilham was to be regarded as an enemy or not. "Are we to be regarded as enemies to this great apostolical man," &c. What follows is clearly the alleged matter of fact on which this question rests. Nor should it be forgotten that all this is mere allegation. These "notions" are not specified; their unscriptural character is not shown; there is no proof, or even attempted proof: yet this daring assertion is sufficient, we are told, to place Mr. Kilham by the side of the Reformers of the sixteenth century! We have no hesitation in recording our judgment that the statement is entirely unjustifiable.

Lastly: Mr. Kilham deserved censure for this publication, if nothing but his ministerial standing were taken into account. His probation terminated at the Conference of 1789. He had then, before God and His church, adopted Methodism, and it had adopted him as one of its ministers. Yet in about two years and six months he comes forth as an avowed reformer: changes must be made; all are bigots who dissent from him; even Wesley is unscriptural! Whatever the piety, or intelligence, or good intentions of the man, we regard such conduct as out of place in one who had been fully recognised as a minister

less than three years. Much exception has been taken to the proceedings against Kilham, because Bradburn and Taylor, who had also published pamphlets on the subject in dispute, were not put on their trial. But the cases were by no means similar. They wrote in more temperate language; and their ministerial standing was so different, that a course fairly called for in the one case, might be justly omitted in the other.

Mr. Kilham superintendent of Aberdeen.

The Conference which censured Mr. Kilham sent him as superintendent to Aberdeen. As his views were so strongly in favour of the administration of the sacraments by the preachers, this appointment must have been very agreeable to him, there being no limitation to the administration of the ordinances in Scotland. But immediately after that trial, and its issue, it seems most extraordinary that Mr. Kilham should have been charged with the superintendency of a Circuit. This fact is a sufficient answer to all the charges of personal unkindness to him against the preachers of that day. Had there been the least disposition of this kind in existence, he would not have been superintendent of Aberdeen.

If, however, the Conference thought that an act of great kindness and confidence would induce Mr. Kilham to pursue a more discreet line of conduct, and to confine himself for the future to the proper work of a Christian minister, abstaining from all endeavours to disturb the peace of the Societies, it was greatly mistaken. A few months only after he entered upon his new Circuit, he

Circulates an anonymous paper throughout the Connexion.

prepared and circulated a handbill, covering rather more than three large quarto pages, in double columns, "To all Local Preachers, Circuit Stewards, Town Stewards, Class-Leaders, and intelligent Persons in the Methodist Societies and Congregations, this Letter is most respect-

fully addressed by their affectionate Brethren and hearty Well-wishers, C. TRUEMAN, M. FREEMAN."

In noticing the successive productions of Mr. Kilham, we shall only make a few passing observations, for the purpose of showing their character; deferring any particular examination of their tendency to the time when we give an account of his trial. In this address, speaking in the character of the Methodist people, he says, "We have several very considerable evils to complain of, which have given us and many others a great deal of uneasiness." He then refers to the addresses sent by several of the Societies to the last Conference; and on this subject his language is so extraordinary that we give it entire. "They were the voice of a numerous and respectable body of ourselves. This voice should have been heard, whether it could have been complied with or not. But how was it treated? Why, strange to tell, upon a motion being made by a preacher whose name need not be mentioned, a majority of the Conference voted for their being all destroyed without examination. Thus the business was finished at once. The preachers spent days in trying some of their brethren who got ordained, and the author of a pamphlet addressed to the friends and members of the Newcastle Society, and in other things of little importance; but they had no time to waste in examining the mind and will of their followers. The pamphlet alluded to was written on liberal principles; and, in our opinion, the author deserved the thanks of the Conference, instead of being censured. We have read it ourselves, and wish every thinking person in our Connexion would peruse it. To return. Their conduct in destroying our petitions was as gross an insult as could have been offered unto us. One would at least think, that they are as independent of

The disingenuous character of this address.

us as the state clergy are of their followers; but this is not the case. We do not wish to be unreasonable; but we will be heard, or our resentment shall be felt."

We have given this lengthy extract, that the reader may judge whether a preacher thus personating two of the people, —saying that a slight to them is an insult "to us;" that "we have read the pamphlet," which he himself wrote; and lauding it,—acts according to truth and godly simplicity. Is this the conduct of a Christian minister, whose "notions of consistency were very strict and uncompromising?" Besides, he well knew that all the addresses related to the administration of the Sacraments by Methodist preachers, so that to read one was to know the purport of all.

Sketch of Kilham's scheme of Methodist polity.

The paper then gives an outline of a new scheme of polity for Methodism. 1. Every Society is to choose its own leaders and stewards; and these, the Circuit stewards; with a general election of leaders, town and Circuit stewards, every year, the people being at liberty to re-elect their old leaders, or to elect new ones. The leaders were to meet the classes alternately, as the local preachers preach at the different places; one great object of this being, to make the leaders the proper representatives of the people. 2. When any one gave a word of exhortation, or evinced promise of being a local preacher, it would be the business of the leaders to collect the sense of the Societies and congregations; and, if the report be favourable, he is to be employed. 3. He who has laboured successfully as a local preacher, to be proposed at a Quarterly, and then at a District, Meeting, and, if approved, to be taken into the ministry. 4. More care was recommended in taking men out, &c. 5. Preachers recommended to improve their minds by education, and more carefully to study their sermons. 6. Preachers misbehaving to be sent home.

7. Every preacher who is able to travel to have a Circuit. 8. No man to continue as a preacher, or supernumerary, if his want of health made it impossible for him to perform the duties of the office. 9. More care should be taken in admitting members, &c. 10. A majority of leaders, fairly chosen by the people, ought to know the minds of their electors, and act according to their will in all things, &c.—These are the weighty matters urgently recommended; and their announcement is followed by various suggestions relating to an improved mode of directing the financial affairs of the Body. Mr. Kilham's admirers speak exultingly of the fact, that, this address being published anonymously, "although several of Mr. Kilham's confidential friends knew him to have been the writer, the secret was kept until such time that he did not care to acknowledge its paternity." We can easily conceive of such a course being justifiable, when the civil power is arrayed against religious freedom, and prepared to imprison or destroy those who pass over the limits it has prescribed. But in a purely voluntary religious society, which a man may leave at pleasure, without fear of any penal consequences, we confess we cannot reconcile such conduct with the character of a Christian minister.

Mr. Kilham circulates his "Priscilla and Aquila" and "Martin Luther."

The secret being so well kept, Mr. Kilham continued a minister, and superintended a Circuit, in the Connexion in which, according to his judgment, such considerable evils existed, and which required such complete renovation. As no new difficulty arose, he passed safely through the Conferences of 1793–4. Soon after his return from the last-mentioned annual assembly, he issued a pamphlet on the Bristol disputes, under the title of "Priscilla and Aquila," which does not require any special notice. But, early in 1795, he wrote a circular, which filled seven

Plan and character of the latter piece.

pages quarto, signed "Martin Luther," and sent it to the preachers. The primary object of this production appears to have been to counteract a plan for ordaining all the preachers, and appointing over the several sections of Methodism superintending pastors, with episcopal authority,—a scheme which had obtained serious consideration. To this project Mr. Kilham was greatly opposed; and in the paper just mentioned, he gave a sketch of the history of the church during the first three centuries, from Lord Chancellor King's "Primitive Church." He then supplied an outline of Methodism, and showed that it had no need of bishops, being already framed on the model of the primitive church, with the exception of such alterations as he suggested. Then followed his views on the controversy at Bristol, with advices respecting the proper course of proceeding in that case. We quote two or three passages, to show the manner in which Mr. Kilham expressed himself on some rather nice points: "Every superintendent is the bishop of his Circuit. His colleagues in full connexion are his presbyters. All his colleagues on trial, and local preachers, are his helpers. It is probable, when the sacrament is universally given, every superintendent will have power to authorize respectable and useful local preachers, as well as his colleagues, to assist in administering it, and baptizing of children. This will be an ease to him, and advantageous to the Connexion. They will fill up the place in a sacrament that they now occupy in a love-feast. None can oppose this liberty but *narrow-spirited bigots, or lordly over-grown bishops,* who suppose 'they are the men, and wisdom will die with them.'"* These *italics* are Mr. Kilham's own; most other persons will think the language sufficiently strong

* Page 3.

without them. Again: "As the devil and his angels, with all their helpers, cannot hinder the people from having liberty of conscience with us, the sacrament will soon become universal." * And lastly: "A great deal of evil has been done by the *hasty* unscriptural pieces which were published from the Manchester, London, and Leeds Conferences. What appeared in the newspapers, in circular letters, and in your Minutes, might have been expected from the *conclave* at Rome, or from a *bishop's court* in England; but the sentiments are so illiberal, that they ought to be *expunged* from every record of your Connexion; and, if possible, from the *memory* of all that have heard them." †

Kilham's "Paul and Silas" published.

Mr. Kilham attended the Manchester Conference of 1795, and caused to be distributed among the preachers at the opening of that assembly, "An earnest Address to the Preachers assembled in Conference, by their affectionate Brethren in the Gospel, Paul and Silas. 1795." The tract does not merit any special remark, except that it contains an outline of the author's views, given in his usual style, respecting what Methodism was, and what it ought to be.

Mr. Kilham was now appointed superintendent of Alnwick, to which Circuit he immediately repaired; and soon returned to his favourite employment of writing on Methodist polity. The reasons assigned for this course, as recorded in his Life, are curious. According to his official biographer, Mr. Kilham states, that the reason which induced him, and those other preachers who argued for full toleration, (that is, perfect liberty for the preachers to give, and for the members to receive, the sacraments in the chapels,) to accept the "Plan of Pacification," were, that,

* Page 4. † Page 6.

"1. We have gained a great deal more than we expected. 2. Our people are not prepared for more at present. 3. In two or three years we shall have all we wish."* But no sooner does he reach his Circuit, than we read, "Mr. Kilham states, that, on returning from Conference, when the Articles of Pacification had been adopted, he felt, on reflection, considerable dissatisfaction that so little had been accomplished towards establishing real liberty in the Societies; and as a likely means of securing to them the full measure to which they were entitled, he judged it would be useful to enumerate the steps already taken, and the regulations which had been made since Mr. Wesley's death: and also to supply an outline or plan of what he considered ought to be done, in order to give content to, and establish peace in, the Connexion."† This purpose was carried into effect; and, in due time, appeared: "The Progress of Liberty amongst the People called 'Methodists.' To which is added, the Outlines of a Constitution. Humbly recommended to the serious Consideration of the Preachers and the People late in Connexion with Mr. Wesley. By Alexander Kilham, Preacher of the Gospel. 'Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.' (2 Thess. v. 22.) Alnwick: Printed by J. Catnagh. 1795." The title, read in Mr. Kilham's sense, fairly exhibits the object of this little work; which, as its tenets will hereafter come under consideration, we need not further describe. Mr. Kilham had, however, now placed his name, and his views on ecclesiastical polity, in juxtaposition, before the Methodist public, and boldly challenged their verdict. He was not left long in suspense as to the course which the leading ministers in the Connexion felt called upon to take.

Mr. Kilham publishes his "Progress of Liberty."

Soon after the appearance of this pamphlet, William

* "Life," p. 225. † *Ibid.*, p. 234.

Hunter, chairman of the Newcastle District, received a letter from the preachers of the London Circuit, denouncing the production in the strongest terms, and demanding a Special District Meeting for the trial of its author. When it is stated that among the names attached to this letter we find Adam Clarke, Walter Griffith, and Richard Reece, it will be understood by all who are acquainted with the Methodist polity of that day, that the requirement did not proceed from any party adverse to real liberty of communication between preachers and people, either by speaking or writing. Mr. Kilham immediately wrote "A candid Examination of the London Methodistical Bull." To give special effect to his reasonings, "The Letter of the London Preachers" is prefixed to his "Examination," headed by the figure of a "bull" belching forth flames; a broad black border surrounding the whole letter, as though it called for the deepest mourning throughout the land. This production, like the preceding, assumes the perfect accuracy of all the author's allegations and assumptions, as though they were admitted facts. The author proceeds to reason on them, as if utterly oblivious that the truth and propriety of these statements were the very things for which he was called to account.

The London preachers demand a Special District Meeting, for the trial of the author.

Mr. Kilham replies to this demand, denouncing it as "the London Methodistical Bull."

After some hesitation and delay, Mr. Hunter summoned a special meeting of the Newcastle District Committee; but that assembly deferred the adjudication of the case to the regular meeting in May. And, when that time arrived, the settlement of the case was referred to the Conference. The time for holding this annual assembly at length arrived; and never before had such excitement existed in the Methodist Connexion. Indeed, circumstances abroad and at home were calculated greatly to aggravate any discord or partisan antipathies which might exist in the Con-

The trial deferred till the Conference. Peculiar and painful position of Methodism.

nexion. In France the long smouldering fires of republicanism had broken out into the utmost fury of revolution; the throne and the church had been destroyed; the king and royal family, the nobility and clergy, with much that was dignified and virtuous in the land, had perished on the scaffold, or been driven into exile. Nor did it suffice that the French republic had succeeded in breaking down all opposition, and establishing a reign of terror and of blood. Assailed by an armed confederacy of the great European nations, it went forth to fight and to conquer its foes on every side: so that France had become the terror of all her neighbours, and Britain began to dread a descent on her coasts. This success of France gave spirit and energy to great numbers in England who sympathized with the levelling and violent political sentiments which obtained in that country. Disaffection to the British government had been widely engendered, and greatly prevailed; and the mischievous effects of these doctrines were fearfully aggravated by a bad harvest, and the high price of provisions, which pressed with terrible severity on the labouring classes. Political clubs and associations were formed in all directions; and every effort was made by designing men to induce the working classes to believe that a grand confederacy was formed against their interests by the English government and aristocracy. At length a stone was thrown into the king's carriage, as he was returning from Drury Lane Theatre; and everything seemed to portend some terrible outbreak.

In these times of trouble, the Methodist preachers did not wholly escape odium, in consequence of the indiscreet expressions of one or two weak men. Some supposed the Connexion was disaffected to the Crown; while, on the other hand, the firm stand made by the Methodist

preachers against the infidel sentiments imported from France, and sown broadcast over the country by the publications of Paine and his disciples, rendered them very unpopular with many; and this was greatly increased by the writings of Mr. Kilham, who had, from 1792, represented the Conference as exerting all its power to keep the Societies in subjection to its will, and so depriving them of the liberty to which they were entitled by Scripture and reason. Many curious, and some amusing, illustrations of this painful state of things might be given. In one of the popular caricatures of the day, a number of preachers were represented as flying through the air. Among the crowd below, gazing upward, was an old woman, in the act of exclaiming, "Pray Heaven they may not light here; they 'll devour everything." But this popular odium assumes a more serious aspect, when a judicious senior preacher like John Pawson gravely advises that no more preachers should come to the Conference of 1796 "than were absolutely necessary for the transaction of the requisite business: lest the price of provisions should be raised still higher, and both themselves and the chapels fall a sacrifice to the popular prejudice and fury." *

The effect of this state of things on those who had then to direct the affairs of the Connexion.

These combined circumstances, as we shall note in the proper place, rendered the direction of the affairs of Methodism at that time a work of great labour, difficulty, and responsibility. Those who, from their age and ability, had to take the chief part in the trial of Mr. Kilham, had something more practical to consider than his mere suggestions, and their accordance with the abstract principles of church government. They were bound to regard the opinions and actions of Wesley. They were under a legal and moral obligation to adhere to

* Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1845, p. 419.

the provisions of the "Deed Poll." They had to consider very carefully the effect of any alteration of Methodist law, or any change in the principles of its polity, upon the future well-being of the Connexion; and they had, moreover, so to act as not unnecessarily to excite the ill-will of the government, or the indignation of the populace. Nor can the proceedings of Conference in this case be fairly judged, unless all these circumstances be taken into account.

Circumstances of Mr. Kilham.

It is no more than simple justice to say, that Mr. Kilham had many things to plead, if not as a reason, at least as an apology, for his proceedings, to which no subsequent agitator of Methodism can lay claim. He had been driven by persecution to enter the Methodist ministry as a "real Dissenter." Soon after he had been received into "Full Connexion," Wesley,—whose manner of directing the Societies was such, that his removal must necessarily lead to important changes, had been taken away. Mr. Kilham saw what he thought those changes should be, and laboured earnestly to direct the mind of preachers and people to what he regarded as enlightened views; and to secure by Conferential legislation the object of his desire, that the Methodist Societies should be governed by a scheme of polity which he conceived to be at once large-minded, liberal, and scriptural. At first, his attention was fixed on the concession of the Lord's Supper to all the Societies which desired it; but afterwards he enlarged his desires, and contemplated an entire revision of the government. He was not, therefore, like a member of a settled and fully organized community, labouring to subvert its established government. He lived in a time of transition; he saw change inevitable, and struggled to secure that which he thought best. As an individual, he was perfectly at liberty to approve, and labour to secure,

that system of Methodist polity which he called "liberal and scriptural." Whether the Conference could meet his wishes, or ought to do so, was quite another question, and one which they had to decide.

The Conference proceeds to the trial of Mr. Kilham. Mr. Mather's questions and Mr. Kilham's replies.

The Conference assembled on Monday, July 25th, 1796. Thomas Taylor was elected president, and Dr. Coke secretary. As soon as the assembly was prepared for business, Mr. Kilham's case was introduced. With the consent of the Conference, Mr. Mather proposed the following questions, to which the annexed answers were given:—

"*Q.* 1. Do you acknowledge the pamphlet entitled 'An Appeal to the Methodist Societies of the Alnwick Circuit,' dated '24th May, 1796,' to be yours?

"*A.* I do.

"*Q.* 2. Do you intend to support the third paragraph in the first page of that pamphlet, which declares that 'there are several parts of our plan both unscriptural and oppressive to the people?'

"*A.* I desire time to consider this question.

"*Q.* 3. Do you intend to support the second paragraph of the second page of that pamphlet, declaring that 'no government under heaven, except an absolute monarchy or papal hierarchy, is so despotic or oppressive as ours,' or words to that purport?

"*A.* I desire time to consider this question.

"*Q.* 4. Do you intend to support the second paragraph in the third page of that pamphlet?—'Priestcraft is the same in every sect and party,' &c., &c. And do you mean to support this as our character, according to the implication of that paragraph?

"*A.* I desire time to consider this question.

"*Q.* 5. How long have you been received into Connexion?

"*A.* I have travelled nearly twelve years.

"*Q.* 6. Did Mr. Wesley receive you into Full Connexion, and did he give you the Minutes of the Conference?

"*A.* Mr. Wesley received me into Full Connexion, and I think gave me the Minutes of the Conference.

"*Q.* 7. Did you then promise and intend to support and execute these Minutes and Rules, as far as your situation enabled you?

"*A.* I did, according to my knowledge of them.

"*Q.* 8. Will you abide by that engagement, or do you retract it?

"*A.* I desire time to consider this question."

The Conference then desired Mr. Kilham to withdraw till he should give-in his answers to the above questions. On the next morning he delivered-in a written paper which the Conference judged to be no answer at all, but merely a repetition of what he had before advanced in his pamphlets.*

The Conference lays down two resolutions for its guidance.

The Conference was addressed by Thomson, Coke, Moore, and Bradburn, and the following minutes were unanimously adopted:—

"1. The Conference unanimously agree to confirm the minute made in the first Conference held after the death of Mr. Wesley; viz., 'We engage to follow strictly the plan which Mr. Wesley left us at his death.'

"2. As an explanation of the above, the Conference unanimously determine to abide by the Large Minutes of the Conference, in everything which respects both the doctrine and discipline contained therein." †

* "Minutes of the Examination of Mr. Alexander Kilham, before the General Conference in London, on the 26th, 27th, and 28th July, 1796," pp. 3, 4.

† "Minutes," p. 4.

As Mr. Kilham voted for both these minutes, it was observed by one of the preachers, that by so doing he had recanted all his late publications. Kilham replied that he agreed to the preceding minutes as far as they were agreeable to the Scriptures. But it was urged, "that we believe in the Koran of Mahomet as far as it is agreeable to the Scriptures; but we agree to the Minutes because we believe *them to be* agreeable to the Scriptures. Mr. Kilham then observed that he saw only *some little things* in the Large Minutes which he did not approve of." *

The course of procedure.

The Conference then proceeded to the trial. A charge was preferred in plain and distinct terms; and each charge was supported by one or more passages from Mr. Kilham's works. Mr. Kilham was then called upon to show that the charge was not proved by these extracts from his pamphlets, when taken in the sense in which he wrote them. The Conference, having heard all that he had to say, came to the resolution that such charge was or was not proved. Another charge was then, in a similar manner, preferred, and disposed of, until the whole had been dealt with; when the Conference came to its final judgment on the entire case.

This may at first sight appear a strange mode of conducting a judicial examination, and so it was; but this arose entirely out of the peculiarity of the case. If Mr. Kilham had been accused of committing any offence, and pleaded not guilty of the charge, the *onus* of proof would clearly lie on the accusing party, and it would be for them to bring forward such evidence as would satisfy those who had to decide on the case that he was guilty; or, failing in this, he would be declared not guilty, but such a course was not applicable in this case. In many of his own acknowledged

* "Minutes," &c., p. 4.

pamphlets, Kilham had published statements reflecting on Wesley, on Methodism as a system, and on the moral and religious character of the preachers. The authorship of these passages was not denied, but boastingly admitted, and no further proof could make the writing and publishing more criminal, religiously and Methodistically, than it appeared to be on the first reading of them. Mr. Kilham therefore went to the bar of the Conference, as a man who had written and published what every one but the criminal and his abettors believed to be high treason, would go to the dock at Newgate. The circumstances of the case precluded all need of further evidence or argument. All that was requisite to subserve the ends of justice and of mercy, was to afford the accused party every opportunity of explaining the sense in which he used the language employed, of justifying it and proving its truth, or of withdrawing any part of it, or expressing contrition for its publication.

The course taken was adapted and designed to afford him every facility for this purpose; and, as will be seen in the sequel, the spirit and manner of the proceedings elicited the commendation even of Mr. Kilham himself.

The first charge investigated.

The first charge against him was this: "Mr. Kilham has asserted, that 'many of the local and travelling preachers want abilities for the work in which they are engaged.*'" At first Mr. Kilham answered, that this was not put as an assertion, but as a question; but this was regarded as a quibble. He then refused to give any instances in proof of his statement; his only answer still being, "It was a question for information." The Con-

* "'Progress of Liberty,' p. 30: 'Are there not many local, not to say travelling, preachers who cannot explain, to the satisfaction of any sensible Christian, a number of doctrines which are essential to our salvation?'"

ference then decided unanimously that "Mr. Kilham has not proved this allegation, and, therefore, is culpable for making it." *

The second accusation was, "That Mr. Kilham has charged the preachers with being guilty of spiritual tyranny." † When called upon to justify or explain the passages on which the charge was founded, Mr. Kilham replied that he had given his answer in the written paper handed in at the commencement of those proceedings; adding, "If that does not satisfy, I have nothing more to say." It was then unanimously decided, "This allegation has not been proved, and Mr. Kilham is consequently culpable." ‡ The Conference then declared that they had "no power but what the Spirit and love of God, and

The second charge examined and decided.

* "Minutes," p. 5.

† "1. 'Progress of Liberty,' p. 19: 'We detest the conduct of persecuting Neros, and all the bloody actions of the great Whore of Babylon: and yet, in our measure, we tread in their steps.'

"2. 'Bull,' p. 26: 'And do not many of the preachers also want to bind you in chains of their own making?'

"3. 'Bull,' p. 28: 'That the reign of Popery is fully ended *even among us*, is a doubtful case with me. Is it not a species of Popery to keep our people ignorant of a number of things which concern their happiness?'

"4. 'Trial,' p. 9: 'Is it possible to torture the words of this passage to imply that I have cruelly represented the body of Methodist preachers to be spiritual tyrants, and sons of the great Whore of Babylon? If in anything we wish to force the consciences of our people, or withhold any of their privileges from them, so far as this is our conduct, we in *some measure* imitate spiritual tyrants; and resemble, in *some respects*, the sons of the great Whore of Babylon.'

"5. 'Appeal,' p. 2: 'No government under heaven, except an *absolute monarchy* or the *papal hierarchy*, is so despotic and oppressive as ours is. Can it be supposed that a system of this nature would never be abused to the reproach of our Connexion? Does it not open a way for designing men to act tyrannically and dishonestly? Is it not calculated to create jealousies and distrust in our leading men?'"

‡ "Minutes," p. 6.

the love of the people, have given and continued to them." *

The third charge, consisting of several articles, considered.

The third charge was, that "Mr. Kilham has charged the preachers with immorality, in the following particulars: First Article. That the preachers have imposed upon the people in bringing out improper persons from selfish motives." †

In reply, Mr. Kilham said, "The statement was a supposition arising from the present rules existing among us; and that one of the objections brought against him on this charge amounted, on his part, merely to the proposal

* "Minutes," p. 6.

† "1. 'Progress of Liberty,' p. 83: 'While Mr. Wesley lived, he acted according to his own will in receiving many to travel in our Connexion. Many persons were brought from different Circuits by the influence of individuals, who would never have been recommended by the people where they had frequently preached. The local preachers, the trustees, leaders, and stewards, were amazed and grieved at their having *crept* among us, in such a *dark, unfair way*.'

"2. 'Progress of Liberty,' pp. 33, 34: 'I as an *assistant* may wish to have the honour of sending many labourers into the vineyard of Christ; and, therefore, thrust out *against the minds of the people* such men as are unfit for the work, to gratify my vanity. Or, I may like to *lounge at home* with my family when I ought to go to *disagreeable* or *distant places*, and appoint a local preacher to supply for me. He does it cheerfully, hoping one good turn will make way for another. When he has hacked about for me throughout the year, as *a reward for his services* I get him a place among the travelling preachers, *without stooping to ask at a Quarterly Meeting* whether he will be suitable or not. Or, I may see a man that has not attended well to his business, and is on the borders of being a bankrupt, and does not know what to turn his hand to. His pitiful stories may work on my passions; and, without *consulting with the people* in the Circuit where I labour, I may get him accepted both at the District Meeting and the Conference. Have not these methods been pursued to bring out preachers ever since the death of Mr. Wesley? And has not the Conference been deceived by some of its members, and accepted men to labour with us, that are to this day a *dead weight* to the Connexion?'"

of a question." The judgment of the Conference on this article was, that Mr. Kilham's charge against the preachers, in this instance, "has not been proved. Mr. Kilham's defence is an evasion; and he is therefore culpable in both these respects." * There was one, and but one, dissenting voice to this judgment. It objected to the insertion of the term "evasion."

The second article of this charge was, "That the preachers have only mock examinations of their characters." † In reply, Mr. Kilham said that he maintained it in its full force as *his opinion*. Called upon to name any preacher who had been tried by a mock examination, he answered, "I think that has no connexion with the subject; and that all the examinations taken in the Conference, without the people having a single voice by themselves, or their representatives, are mock examinations." The Conference then came to the unanimous judgment: That "Mr. Kilham has not proved his allegation; on the contrary, he has in effect refused to enter into any proof of it. In both these respects the Conference judge him to

* "Minutes," p. 7.

† "1. 'Progress of Liberty,' p. 38: 'Our present mode of examining each others' characters only makes sensible people laugh at us.'

"2. 'Trial,' pp. 12, 13: 'In different Circuits where I have been, many of our friends have considered this examination in no other light than a *solemn farce*. I could name a Circuit or two last year, where the preachers had been at variance for several months before the Conference. They mutually accused each other of different things which were contrary to their happiness and usefulness in the vineyard of Christ. But when their names were called over in the Conference, they had *nothing against each other:* though no reconciliation had taken place previous to their meeting in Manchester. Does what Mr. Wesley said in the pulpit prove that this mode is the best in the world? Is there any argument in his challenging his hearers to produce anything of the kind?'"

be culpable." * To this judgment the Conference appended the following: "N.B. The Conference have not only at all times received the written or verbal testimony of our people concerning the preachers, but have called upon them to bear their testimony in every question of this kind." †

The third article under this head was the statement, "That the preachers have wasted the public money." ‡ In defence, "Mr. Kilham said that respecting the third part of the third charge, viz., that 'the preachers are guilty of wasting the public money,' he has answered it on the thirteenth page of the 'Trial.'" § When asked what he

* "Minutes," p. 8.

† *Ibid.*

‡ "1. 'Progress of Liberty,' p. 41: 'They' (the people) 'will prevent us from wasting that money, which in part has been collected from many that needed it to supply their own wants.'

"2. 'Progress of Liberty,' p. 48: 'At the same time they would see that the monies collected from *a poor and afflicted people* were not foolishly and sinfully *lavished away*.'

"3. 'Progress of Liberty,' p. 54: 'For while we *whine* and *cant*, like *begging friars*, to excite compassion in our friends, under a *pretence* of supporting worn-out preachers and their widows; and *prostitute their charity* to support rich old men, and the young widows of old men: what Jesuit ever acted a baser part than we act?'

"4. 'Trial,' p. 42: 'According to the minutes I have quoted from Mr. Wesley's "Journal," all the public collections are to be made by an assistant preacher, or by his direction. In the "Progress of Liberty," and in the examination of the "London Bull," I endeavoured to prove that a great deal of money is misapplied; that the Yearly, the Kingswood School, and the Preachers' Fund collections, especially the two last, are managed to the dishonour of our Connexion.'"

§ The following is the passage referred to: "I shall consider want of economy and equity; waste; foolishly and sinfully lavishing away the people's money, together. I will state a few cases, and then apply them; and this shall be confined to the last Conference. 1. A great number of preachers were present that had no business to transact; who had no right

referred to when he spoke of a want of economy, he answered, "that he referred to the long and unnecessary removes of preachers and their families; and their travelling in stage-coaches when they might ride on horseback; and in the inside of coaches when they might travel on the outside." * He was then desired to produce any instances of such culpable doing. He named some, and they were carefully considered; and in all the Conference judged that there was nothing more than unavoidable expense. Mr. Kilham further acknowledged that there are many long removes of preachers and families which are expensive and necessary; and that he himself was an instance of this kind, but that many others were unnecessary. The Conference then came to a unanimous vote, that "Mr. Kilham has not proved this allegation, and is therefore highly criminal for bringing this charge." †

The fourth article of this charge set forth, that Mr. Kilham asserted "that the preachers have been guilty of swindling." ‡ Mr. Kilham stated in reply, that "he meant

to be there by the rules of former Conferences. 2. Several preachers left good horses in their Circuits, and went by coach, that might have travelled at one-fourth of the expense had they gone on horseback. 3. Many travelled in the inside of coaches who might have travelled for half the expense on the outside. 4. Long removes of families. Only compare the Minutes of the two last years, and you will find many long removes. Several large families removed to a great distance from whence they were before."—"Trial," pp. 13, 14.

* "Minutes," p. 9.

† *Ibid.*

‡ "1. 'Progress of Liberty,' p. 43: 'For want of this equitable plan, I have known persons receive from the Conference, *and from the Circuits*, such sums as would have been rejected with indignation in a Quarterly Meeting.'

"2. 'Progress of Liberty,' pp. 43, 44: 'But nothing has created such uneasiness among our people as collections made for horses. I could relate

only want of economy." Called on to produce an instance, he mentioned the person referred to in one of the extracts cited. This person had been suspended from the ministry, and was under suspension, as Mr. Kilham confessed he knew, when he wrote his pamphlet.

several things on this subject, which would only wound and grieve our serious friends.'

"3. 'Progress of Liberty,' p. 45: 'I could relate four or five true narratives which would justify every step I have recommended. These are so well known in many Circuits, that the remembrance of them to this day is very grievous to our people.'

"4. 'Trial,' p. 15: 'In my pamphlet I said, for want of an equitable plan, I have known persons receive from the Conference, and *from Circuits*, such sums as would have been rejected with indignation in a Quarterly Meeting. The leaders and stewards would have considered it downright swindling. I will only produce one instance here to prove my assertion; but I pledge myself, if called upon by the Conference, to produce several others of a similar nature. Mr. R—— removed with his wife and family from Hexham to Thirsk. He demanded three guineas (I think that was exactly the sum) from the Hexham stewards to help him to his new appointment. This was amply sufficient, as he had a good horse to ride on himself. He received other three guineas from the Conference. The preachers supposed that, as the Hexham Circuit was so much in debt, the stewards could not remove him. But when he received both these sums, he would not return either of them. This same preacher sold a horse, with a saddle and bridle, for about eight guineas, before he went to Thirsk, and pocketed the money. But when he came to his new appointment, he demanded of the people to enter into a subscription, and buy him a horse. Is there no swindling in matters of this nature? I am bold to aver, that while our people are not allowed to know how much money we collect, and how it is disbursed, we labour under temptations to dishonesty, which would be removed, were they admitted to a proper share in the management of our affairs.'

"5. 'Trial,' pp. 16, 17: 'Honesty never shrinks from responsibility. In many Circuits where I have travelled, I heard the people declare they had their fears respecting some of our brethren with regard to their honesty. And as they had an opportunity of concealing their affairs from the notice of leaders and stewards, this led them to imagine that they would not be exact in some cases.'"

The Conference then read and placed on their minutes a letter from the Ripon Circuit steward, in explanation of the charge contained in the second extract just quoted. The material part of this letter is as follows: "The plain truth was this: When Mr. R—— came, he said, that on account of sickness, &c., in his family, he had run into debt, and was under the necessity to sell his horse to pay it; and, so far from either demanding or desiring a horse to be bought for him, he proposed to walk the Circuit. Mr. Thomas Harrison, the assistant, and Mr. R. W., the other Circuit steward, and I, talked the matter over; and, knowing how extensive the Circuit was, thought it impossible for him to supply it: therefore, of two evils, we chose what we thought the least, and set a private subscription on foot for another horse. It would be well, before you publish such positive assertions to the world, that you was more careful not to exceed the bounds of truth." *

When called on for another instance, Kilham mentioned the conduct of a respected preacher concerning a horse. The case was minutely examined, and the brother was acquitted most honourably. When called on to name a third instance, he mentioned a person who had been five years ago tried by the Conference, and put back upon trial. Further instances being demanded, Mr. Kilham refused to bring any more charges, unless the Conference would indemnify him in respect of all consequences. The Conference then judged, "that no person has a right to bring public charges against individuals, or against a body of people, unless he be ready on proper occasion to substantiate these charges to the full, whatever might be the consequences."

* "Minutes," p. 11.

Mr. Kilham then produced the copy of a letter written by Mr. Rodda to Mr. Mather, containing suspicious intimations respecting some of the public money. This letter was unfairly obtained by one or more of Mr. Kilham's friends in Manchester, and still more unjustly communicated to him. The Conference, determined to sift this matter to the bottom, ordered the letter to be read, and found that the fears of Mr. Rodda related to some eighteen guineas belonging to the Book Room, which Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore had received; to Mr. Rogers having detained the deed of the furniture of the chapel house; and to the circumstance that some of the Kingswood money was missing at the last Conference.

After careful examination the Conference were perfectly convinced that there was no ground for the fears expressed in this letter. Mr. Kilham acknowledged himself fully satisfied, and believed "that the money in question was not at all embezzled." *

The Conference then unanimously delared, "That Mr. Kilham has not proved this allegation, and is therefore highly criminal for bringing such a charge without proof."

The fifth article of this general charge was, that Mr. Kilham had accused the preachers of "(criminal) secrecy in transacting their business." † The Conference inserted

* "Minutes," p. 12.

† "'Trial,' p. 16: 'That there is secrecy in the disbursement of our collections is notorious. They are detailed this year more than formerly; but the Minutes do not give a fair statement of our expenditure, as I shall endeavour to point out, £334 19*s.* 6*d.* for sickness, besides what the Circuits allow, appears to be an incredible sum. But the following sums are much beneath *par:* removal of families £176 2*s.*, expenses in travelling £286 8*s.* 8*d.* If the book were fairly examined, where the monies are detailed, if I am not greatly mistaken, the two last sums would be near twice as much as those I have put down from the Minutes. For we

the word "criminal;" because, as they said, it would be absurd to charge men with being *guilty of secrecy*, if it had not been carried to a criminal extent. Mr. Kilham answered, "that by this 'secrecy' he meant only their not publishing the expenditure in detail."

The Conference then came to a unanimous resolution, that "Mr. Kilham is highly criminal in bringing in so heavy and dreadful a charge against the body of preachers, and especially against the senior brethren, in a public pamphlet, dispersed throughout the Connexion; and on his defence declaring that he meant their not publishing the expenditure in detail." *

The fourth charge was, that "Mr. Kilham has published, in his various tracts, paragraphs highly derogatory to the character of Mr. Wesley." † Mr. Kilham denied that the

The fourth charge, and the decision of Conference.

frequently hear the preachers that have the chief management of our affairs declare, the expenses of travelling, and removing families, would be a thousand pounds or more for the past year. All our expenditure might be published in detail in four or five pages more than they now fill up. This would lead the people to examine their different Circuits, and prevent them from reflecting on us as they do at present. But while there is secrecy in the very face of our Minutes, no sensible friend can be thoroughly satisfied.'"

* "Minutes," p. 13.

† "1. 'Progress of Liberty,' p. 33: 'While Mr. Wesley lived, he acted according to his own will, in receiving many to travel in our Connexion. Many persons were brought from different Circuits, by the influence of individuals, who would never have been recommended by the people, where they had frequently preached. The local preachers, the trustees, leaders, and stewards, were amazed and grieved at their having *crept* among us in such a *dark unfair way*.'

"2. 'Bull,' p. 4: 'For a number of years, many of our most sensible and pious friends have complained of many evils which are found amongst us. They thought, after Mr. Wesley's death, we should immediately remove them.'

"3. 'Trial,' p. 9: 'I offered to produce in the District Meeting, if

paragraphs upon which the charge was based contained anything derogatory to Mr. Wesley. He is said to have supported this opinion by ten considerations. The first was, "Mr. Wesley never professed himself to be infallible;" and the others were so framed as to exhibit almost all the points at issue between Mr. Kilham and the Conference. It happened, however, that the preachers formed a different judgment; and resolved, "That Mr. Kilham has published, in his various tracts, paragraphs highly injurious to the character of our late venerable father in the Gospel, and therefore has been highly criminal herein." * It cannot be strictly said that this was unanimous, as one preacher dissented, wishing the words *highly blameable* to be inserted instead of *highly criminal*.

The fifth charge, and the judgment of the Conference respecting it.

The fifth charge stated that "Mr. Kilham is guilty of indecent and slanderous language." †

they would give me time, a number of passages from Mr. Wesley's Notes and Sermons (which are considered as the standard of Methodism) that are not consistent with the Scriptures, and the doctrines we profess as a people to believe.'

"4. 'Trial,' p. 32: 'It is an opinion with many, that the people ought to have been put in possession of their own privileges at the death of Mr. Wesley.'

"5. 'Appeal,' p. 1: 'When he (Mr. Wesley) was called to his reward, the preachers did not enter upon a particular examination of his plan, but took it up, and adopted his laws and rules as he left them. It cannot be supposed that Mr. Wesley, who travelled about four thousand miles every year, and preached so very often, would closely attend to a well organized form of church government for his people after his decease. When individuals began to examine different parts of our plan, they found several things in it both *unscriptural and oppressive* to the people.'"

* "Minutes," p. 14.

† *Ibid.*, p. 15.

"1. 'Progress of Liberty,' p. 10: 'We detest the conduct of per-

Mr. Kilham acknowledged that he had no facts on which to ground his supposition, that any assistant would be so base as to accept a bribe to recommend a preacher for the ministry; that his expressions in the preceding passages were unjustifiable, and that he was sorry for them.

secuting Neros, and all the bloody actions of the great Whore of Babylon; and yet, in our measure, we tread in their steps.'

"2. 'Progress of Liberty,' p. 53: 'It (the present plan) will induce young women to do everything that lays in their power to engage old men to marry them, that after their death they may have the benefit of the fund, and the advantage of *sprightly young husbands;* while an *old drone* that has palmed himself on Circuits, who received him as a *scourge from God,* will have abundance to live on when he is superannuated.'

"3. 'Bull,' p. 6: 'Begging by the Address (relating to the Preachers' Fund), which was drawn up long before the alteration of disbursement took place, and not hinting to our friends the nature and design of our present rules, appears *Jesuitical;* and that we cannot proceed on this plan without acting the part of *whining, canting friars.* Among four hundred preachers it may lead some old men, who are badly received, to prolong their years of travelling. If an appeal were made to the whole Connexion, would it not be found that an individual or more, who may be considered as drones amongst us, are received as a scourge from *God,* by a great majority of the Societies where they labour?'

"4. 'Trial,' p. 41: 'That *Mr. Benson* and *many others* have no interest in recommending different persons to travel, cannot be called in question; but I have my doubts respecting several individuals. And I make no scruple in declaring, that should the present plan continue a few years more, I have no doubt but a man of a base character, for five or ten pounds, may prevail on *some* assistants to get him a place to travel amongst us. *God* forbid there should be many that would do this! The door is open, however; and unless it be speedily shut, this will probably be the case, if it has not been the case already.'

"5. 'Appeal,' p. 3: 'Before the pamphlet went to the press, I foresaw the storm that would be raised against me, by a number of the preachers. *Priestcraft* is the same in every sect and party. It loves to deal with *ignorance and credulity.* It *abhors the light,* and ever strives to keep its votaries from free inquiry.'"

Discussion in the Conference on the whole case. Mr. Kilham's expulsion.

No other charge was preferred. Monday was employed in preliminary business, and the whole of Tuesday in the examination of the above charges. On Wednesday the Conference opened at the usual hour, and the case was discussed until eleven o'clock, when Mr. Kilham was desired to withdraw. The remainder of the day was employed, not in summing up the evidence against Mr. Kilham by any one acting in the character of a judge, as assumed in his "Life," but in a long conversation on the whole subject; a course not only proper in itself, but necessary to the preachers coming to a united judgment on the case. At five o'clock Mr. Kilham was called in, and the president intimated that the case had been decided on, and he was prepared to pass sentence of expulsion. At Mr. Kilham's earnest request, the charges against him were again read, and the sentence delayed until the next day.

On Thursday at four o'clock Mr. Kilham again appeared, and, agreeably with the unanimous decision of the Conference, was addressed by the President: "Whereas Mr. Kilham has published to the world so many particulars so highly injurious to the characters of Mr. Wesley and the body of preachers, and declared himself able and willing to substantiate his charges before the Conference; and, notwithstanding, on his trial, was not able to substantiate a single charge: the Conference, on the consideration of the whole body of evidence, together with the disunion, confusion, and distraction, which Mr. Kilham's pamphlets have made through the Societies, do unanimously judge Mr. Kilham unworthy of continuing a member of the Methodist Connexion; and therefore I now inform you, that you are no longer a member of it, but are expelled from the Connexion."

General observations on Mr. Kilham's objections, demands, and assertions.

Here terminated this memorable exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. Mr. Kilham acknowledged, on the second day of the examination, that the Conference treated him with great respect; and at another time, that according to the nature of the court, to which he had from the beginning objected, the trial was as fair as it could be. After two of the preachers had prayed, the meeting was closed. The following days were employed in the routine business of the Conference. On the 5th of August, about a week after his expulsion, Mr. Kilham addressed a letter to the President; in which he professed a deep interest in the Connexion, stating that, if he had erred, it had been with a design to serve the Connexion at large; that he was no open or secret enemy to Methodism. He then affirmed that, if he had other views, he would cheerfully submit to their influence; and added, "It is probable, before another Conference, our views on these subjects may be the same." He closed this letter by asking if his expulsion from the ministry would prevent his acting as a local preacher, and whether he was expelled from the Society.*

This letter was naturally regarded by the Conference as indicating some desire to return; and as the preachers felt anxious not to proceed to extreme measures, unless compelled by stern necessity, they appointed a committee, consisting of Messrs. Mather, Pawson, Thompson, Bradburn, Benson, Bradford, and Moore, to confer with Mr. Kilham, and report to the Conference. In conversation with this committee, he stated, "that Mr. Mather and Mr. Benson had said (in their pamphlet) that it was our general custom to act in the manner he desired; and that he only wished that general

* Kilham's Life, p. 286.

custom to be made law. The Rules of Pacification were then proposed to him, as introductory to a further explanation. His answer was, he thought many of them unscriptural, and he could not conform to them. The committee having reported this to the Conference, it was finally determined that he could have no place in our Connexion while he continued in his present opinions." *

It has been thought necessary to go at length into this case, on account of its importance to the characters of the Methodist preachers of that day, and to the character of Methodism in all time. If the allegations of Mr. Kilham, and the assertions which still continue to be published by his friends and admirers, were strictly true, then, from the death of its Founder, Methodism, in its preachers, principles, and policy, was a foul, deceitful, and pernicious thing. The preceding evidence entirely rebuts these allegations, and shows, not that there were then no defects in the system,—for important alterations were made at the ensuing Conference,—but that it was honest and religious in its purpose, and straightforward and impartial in its policy.

But we shall be told, that Mr. Kilham objected to the constitution of the court by which he was tried, and would dissent entirely from this conclusion. What would be thought of a man who, having broken the law which he was bound to obey, claimed an exemption from the mode of trial which that law prescribes? Mr. Kilham and his friends are very fond of comparing, or contrasting, the course pursued towards him, with that adopted in civil and criminal courts. But how many criminals would be found guilty, if each were allowed to name half the jury by which he was to be tried? Yet this was

* Minutes of Conference, 8vo., vol. i., p. 347.

exactly what Mr. Kilham demanded.* Nor can it be truly said, that the preachers were his judges, jury, and accusers. It was Mr. Kilham's boast that a great number of the preachers participated in his views, and it is certain that some did so; but in a house of one hundred and fifty Christian ministers, admitting there were a few biassed by prejudice on each side, there must have been a large majority whose dispassionateness and impartiality were an ample guarantee of a righteous decision. Besides, Mr. Kilham had known for many years that his status as a Methodist preacher depended on the approval of his conduct by a majority of his brethren: if, therefore, so large a number of preachers could deliberately conspire to act unjustly and unrighteously toward him, what object or hope could he have in continued communion with them?

Yet we must confess there was in Mr. Kilham's character and conduct not only an earnestness, but an apparent honesty truly wonderful. How coolly and confidently he makes the most monstrous assumptions, and utters the most reckless charges! He calls Wesley's laws unscriptural and oppressive; but he has never proved that his rival scheme of universal suffrage, representation, and lay delegation is more scriptural. Yet he says so with the utmost confidence, and no doubt believed that he had made it clear as demonstration. Want of economy is swindling; want of detail in publishing accounts is criminal secrecy, and so on. This mode of procedure was the secret of Mr. Kilham's success, so far as he succeeded in disturbing the mind of the Connexion. Many read and believed, and the disproof came too late to save them. Indeed, Mr. Kilham was the genius of that which is now

* "Life of Kilham," p. 265.

technically called "Methodist reform." He did everything likely to raise people against preachers, and to promote universal suffrage in church government. The absence of all proofs, and the quiet and easy manner in which he represented his views as axioms based on Scripture, and admitted by the universal concurrence of all Christians except Methodist preachers, gave undeserved currency to his opinions. Nothing approaches to it, either before or since his day. Every subsequent agitator of the Connexion has succeeded just as he has copied Mr. Kilham. Nothing really new in this way has since been brought forth. He was, in the full sense of the word, the first and only Methodist "reformer."

This event tested the stability of the Methodist people.

This very serious calamity—for such it undoubtedly was—served, however, in a remarkable manner, to test the stability of Methodist institutions. Here were Societies formed in almost every principal town, and very generally in the villages, and among the rural population throughout the country. In these Societies the members were brought into weekly brotherly intercourse with each other. They were accustomed to speak to one another with the utmost freedom. There were men of more than ordinary ability and energy, called "leaders," who had the religious oversight of small companies of the people, and who generally acquired considerable influence over them. Besides these, there were local preachers and stewards; the former supplementing the labours of the regular preachers, mostly in the villages: the latter were men generally of some standing and substance, charged with the funds of the respective Circuits. All these persons, private members and officers, met in Lovefeasts and Society Meetings in free brotherly intercourse. No portion of the population had such effective

means of intercommunication; none could circulate among each other a knowledge of their sympathies and aversions with equal effect. The question which these circumstances raised was: Had these Societies sufficient religious cohesion to save them from dislocation and ruin in any time of popular excitement? The case before us solved this important question. Notwithstanding the industry and ability of Mr. Kilham; although he had scattered his tracts by tens of thousands throughout the Connexion, and his views were supported by active and influential friends in many of the large Societies; yet, when with three other preachers he inaugurated the New Connexion in 1797, how many members did they take from the old Body? We cannot answer this question precisely; but we know that the numbers reported to the first New Connexion Conference of 1798 were 5,037, and they did not reach 6,000 for eight years afterward: while in 1796, the year of Mr. Kilham's expulsion, the numbers in the Methodist Societies in these islands were 95,226; in 1797, 99,519; in 1798, when the New Connexion held its first Conference, 101,682:—a plain proof that the Methodists of those days were not driven about with every wind of doctrine as to church polity, but were either satisfied with that system under which they had been brought to the knowledge of salvation, or had their minds too fully occupied with their spiritual interests to be affected by the din of controversy with which they were surrounded. If all the members who formed the original New Connexion Societies had been taken from the old Body, they would only amount to about five *per cent.*

Happy results.

We gladly close our investigation into this painfully interesting chapter of Methodist history. Although we have occasionally been constrained to give an opinion on its

successive phases, it has been our principal aim to place before the reader *data* sufficient to enable him to form his own decision on the act of Conference which separated Mr. Kilham finally from the Connexion; and we shall be greatly disappointed if every candid Methodist do not come to the same conclusion as the loving and holy Joseph Entwisle, who, having witnessed the whole trial, declared, "Everything was done, I am sure, to save him; but in vain: such was his conduct, that I believe there was not one preacher but what saw the necessity of suspending him."

CHAPTER III.

THE DIFFICULTIES AND DISPUTES WHICH AROSE AFTER THE DEATH OF WESLEY RESPECTING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CONNEXION, AND THE CHANGES TO WHICH THEY LED, UNTIL THE ADJUSTMENT OF METHODIST POLITY BY THE REGULATIONS OF 1797.

Effects produced by the death of Wesley.

DURING his life, the founder of Methodism watched over the interests of all the Societies with unwearied assiduity. Wherever advice or direction was needed, he was prepared to supply it. In cases of supposed or real delinquency, his piercing eye and sound judgment were soon at hand, accompanied with all the authority necessary to maintain the purity of the church, and to mete out righteous judgment to the offender.

The removal of Wesley deprived the Connexion of this very important and necessary authority; so that in the event of delinquency occurring soon after a Conference, there was no power to deal with the case for nearly twelve months. This state of things rendered some provision absolutely indispensable; and there seemed but two possible ways by which the want could be met:—either by investing some other senior preacher with power similar to that which Wesley had so long wielded; or by dividing the Connexion into districts, and authorizing the resident preachers to act as a Committee of Conference, with full powers in their several localities during the intervals of its assemblies.

Almost immediately after the Founder of Methodism departed this life, circumstances arose which made the

The Halifax meeting and its Circular.

necessity apparent to the whole Connexion. Within four weeks from the day of Wesley's death, William Thompson, the assistant of Halifax, John Pawson, assistant of Birstal, Robert Roberts of Burslem, John Allen of Bradford, Richard Rodda, Samuel Bradburn, and Thomas Tennant of Manchester, Thomas Hanby of Bolton, and Christopher Hopper, met at Halifax, in order to consider the state and wants of the Connexion. Their views are given in a printed circular letter, which was sent through the Connexion, addressed "To the Methodist Preachers in general, and to the Conference and Assistants in particular." * The difficulties of the case are fairly stated, and the possible means of meeting them canvassed. On the main question these preachers say: "There appear to us but two ways,—either to appoint another king in Israel, or to be governed by the Conference Plan, by forming ourselves into Committees. If you adopt the first, who is the man? What power is he to be invested with? And what revenue is he to be allowed? But this is incompatible with the Conference Deed. If the latter, we take the liberty to offer our thoughts upon the subject." They then proceed to recommend "filling up the vacant places in the Conference Deed, according to seniority; to choose a president, secretary, and stewards, for one year; appointing a person from year to year to hold a Conference in Ireland;" and "to appoint different Committees which will take in all the Circuits in the three kingdoms, to manage the affairs of their respective Districts, from one Conference to another," &c. A manner of supplying the vacancy occasioned by the death of Wesley was thus fairly propounded to the Connexion.

On the 13th of April following, Mather and Pawson

* See Appendix E.

visited Halifax, for the purpose of consultation with Thompson on these weighty subjects. They had a long interview, characterized by great brotherly freedom and confidence, and came to a thorough understanding of each other's minds. They then agreed to invite Messrs. Allen, Booth, Parkin, Story, Wrigley, and James Wood, to meet them at Leeds, on Thursday, April 21st. They embodied the result of their deliberations in a series of resolutions, which they sent to all the "assistants" in the Connexion. These resolutions affirmed the principal recommendations of the "Halifax Circular," and suggested some necessary arrangements respecting Ireland. On the 5th of May, Joseph Cownley, Joseph Thompson, Matthew Lowes, John Gaulter, John Stamp, John Ogilvie, John Furness, William Smith, Alexander Smith, Charles Atmore, and John Brettel, held another such meeting, and came to similar conclusions. The preachers in Bristol met on the 11th of May, those of Carmarthen on the 12th, and adopted kindred resolutions. Meanwhile Adam Clarke and other leading preachers in Dublin met, and expressed themselves in nearly similar terms. In this manner the peculiar necessities of Methodism, and the suggestions of the "Halifax Circular" for meeting them, were discussed throughout the country. Whilst, however, the preachers, in consultation with a few of the leading members, were considering what the exigency of the case required, and how it could be best met; many leaders and other official persons thought that they had an interest in the questions at issue, and should also consult together and make known their opinions. Several such meetings were held: the most notable of which was that at Redruth, where above fifty of the leading laymen of Cornwall assembled on June 14th. Minutes of this meeting were printed, and

Similar meetings held at different places, and also meetings of laymen.

sent to every preacher.* These officials seemed to think that it lay entirely with them to arrange the whole polity of the Body. The preachers at Halifax and elsewhere had only aimed at supplying a new and pressing necessity in the administration of affairs, arising out of the death of Wesley. They never thought of altering existing rules, or interfering with any custom or right. These laymen, however, proposed changes which, whether they were aware of it or not, would have revolutionized Methodism. Their resolutions were to the following effect:—1. That the members of every class shall choose their leader. 2. That the people in every Society shall choose their Society stewards. 3. That no preacher shall admit into or expel from any Society without the consent of a majority of such Society. 4. That the (Society) stewards in Quarterly Meeting shall choose the Circuit stewards. 5. That there shall be no division of Circuits without the consent of a majority of the stewards in a Quarterly Meeting. 6. That no person be recommended to travel without a certificate from the stewards in a Quarterly Meeting. 7. That if any preacher be charged with impropriety of conduct, or deficiency of ability, the Circuit stewards shall convene the stewards, and select from them an equal number to the preachers present; and that these shall form a court by which the case shall be heard and decided. They pledged themselves to support the itinerant plan, and cheerfully to contribute their proportion towards its expenses. To these resolutions were added the following proposals:—1. That every preacher coming from a distant Circuit shall bring a certificate of good conduct from a majority of the stewards in Quarterly Meeting. 2. That all preachers in Full Connexion shall

* See Appendix F.

have an equal position with the legal Hundred, except in respect of chapel cases. They finally expressed high disapproval of the proposal for dividing the Connexion into Districts.

On the other hand, the trustees, leaders, stewards, and leading members of the Society in Birmingham met, and issued a Circular, in which, after deploring the removal of the venerable Wesley, they suggest that it is the duty and wisdom of the Methodists in general to adhere to the doctrine and discipline of their late revered Founder. They protest against the introduction of any change, either in the polity of the Body, or in its relation to the Church of England. The preachers on the Circuit attest that the trustees, leaders, and stewards in Dudley, Wednesbury, Darlaston, and Tipton, are in perfect accord with the brethren in Birmingham.

These cases sufficiently indicate the state of the several Societies, when the Conference of 1791 assembled for the transaction of the regular business. Its first act was to elect William Thompson, the principal mover in the "Halifax Circular," as the first president after Wesley,—and Dr. Coke as secretary. The letter which Wesley had written in April, 1785, having been handed to them by Mr. Bradford, was read, and ordered to be inserted in their Minutes. The following minute was immediately, and with one accord, entered in the Journal:—"The Conference have unanimously resolved that all the preachers who are in Full Connexion with them, shall enjoy every privilege that the members of the Conference enjoy, agreeably to the above-written letter of our venerable deceased father in the Gospel."

Having considered the stations of the preachers and other routine business, they proceeded, in general con-

formity with the suggestions of the Halifax Circular, to make arrangements to supply the vacancy occasioned by the death of Wesley in the general oversight and direction of the Connexion during the intervals of the Conference. The following are the questions and answers on the subject:—

Disciplinary discussions of the Conference of 1791.

"*Q.* What regulations are necessary for the preservation of our whole economy as the Rev. Mr. Wesley left it?

"*A.* Let the three kingdoms be divided into Districts: England into nineteen Districts; Scotland into two; and Ireland into six; as follows:—1. London, Sussex, Colchester, Rochester, Canterbury, Bedford, Oxford. 2. Norwich, Diss, Lynn, Bury, Wells. 3. Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Northampton. 4. Sarum, Portsmouth. 5. Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney. 6. Redruth, St. Austle, Penzance. 7. Plymouth, Bideford, Tiverton. 8. Bristol, Taunton, Shepton-Mallet, Bath, Gloucester. 9. Pembroke, Glamorgan, Brecon. 10. Birmingham, Worcester, Wolverhampton. 11. Manchester, Stockport, Oldham, Bolton, Liverpool, Blackburn. 12. Chester, Macclesfield, Burslem. 13. Halifax, Colne, Keighley, Bradford, Huddersfield. 14. Leeds, Sheffield, Wakefield, Birstal, Dewsbury, Otley. 15. York, Hull, Pocklington, Bridlington, Scarborough. 16. Grimsby, Horncastle, Epworth, Gainsborough. 17. Whitby, Yarm, Thirsk, Barnard Castle. 18. Whitehaven, Isle of Man. 19. Newcastle, Sunderland, Hexham, Alnwick. 20. Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dumfries, Kelso. 21. Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness. 22. Dublin, Wicklow, Carlow, Longford. 23. Cork, Bandon, Limerick, Waterford. 24. Athlone, Birr, Castlebar, Sligo. 25. Clones, Cavan, Ballyconnell, Inniskillen, Brookborough. 26. Londonderry, Coleraine, Lisleen, Ballyshannon, Omagh. 27. Charlemont, Tanderagee,

Newry, Downpatrick, Lisburn, Belfast." These were the first Methodist Districts.

"*Q.* What directions are necessary concerning the management of the Districts?"

"*A.* The assistant of a Circuit shall have authority to summon the preachers of his District who are in Full Connexion, on any critical case, which, according to the best of his judgment, merits such an interference. And the said preachers, or as many of them as can attend, shall assemble at the time and place appointed by the assistant aforesaid, and shall form a Committee, for the purpose of determining concerning the business on which they are called. They shall choose a chairman for the occasion; and their decision shall be final till the meeting of the next Conference, when the chairman of the Committee shall lay the minutes of their proceedings before the Conference. Provided, nevertheless, that nothing shall be done by any Committee contrary to the resolutions of the Conference." *

"*Q.* Is it necessary to enter into any engagements in respect to our future plan of economy?

"*A.* We engage to follow strictly the plan which Mr. Wesley left us at his death."

The appointment of Dr. Coke to be president of the ensuing Irish Conference further elicited the judgment of the general Conference respecting the authority and action of these District Committees. In connexion with that appointment, the following question and answer were placed on the minutes:—

"*Q.* Are any directions necessary concerning the preceding minute?

"*A.* No letters of complaint, or on Circuit business, shall

* Minutes, vol. i., p. 241.

be written to England on account of his appointment. The Committees of the Districts shall determine all appeals whatsoever during th intervals of the Conference; and therefore all applications on Society business during the said intervals, which cannot be determined by the assistants of the Circuits, shall be made to the Committees only." *

Groundless charges preferred against the Conference.

This was the first action of the Conference after the death of Wesley in respect of Methodist polity; and for this the preachers have been denounced as selfish, ambitious, and grasping at power, for the purpose of tyrannizing over the people, and depriving them of their reasonable and scriptural rights. For these accusations there is not the least foundation.

It may, indeed, be urged, with some show of reason, that the laity of Methodism were not in full possession of those privileges to which every member of a mature and complete Christian church has an undoubted right; but this does not sustain the foul charge to which reference has been made. Both preachers and people in Methodism, before the death of Wesley, were certainly held in a kind of minority; whilst he exercised such power as could only have been obtained and wielded by a man of such extraordinary designation, zeal, labours, and success. To the preachers he had, by the Deed of Declaration, bequeathed his power, after having gradually trained them to exercise it in conjunction with himself; and it was not only their interest, but their duty, to use this bequest so as to conserve, perpetuate, and extend the work of God. They did this with consummate tact and judgment. The death of Wesley made no alteration in the state and privileges of the people. But it deprived the preachers of a superintendence and oversight essential to the working of the system.

* Minutes, vol. i., p. 246.

The appointment of Districts and District Committees, with full power during the intervals of the Conferences, supplied the means by which the Connexion was enabled to hold on its way, and quietly and carefully to ascertain what further emendations were necessary in order to remove every just cause of complaint, and to carry on the great work of God with unity of purpose and harmony of action.

Nothing, then, can be more unfair than to condemn this conduct of the Conference as unscriptural and unjust; nothing is more uncritical or more unphilosophic, under the actual circumstances of the case, than to laud the resolutions of the Cornish delegates as containing enlightened, liberal, and righteous demands, which ought to have been conceded. We believe, and shall be prepared by and bye to prove, that had the Conference adopted such a basis for their polity, they would have made it unscriptural, and have denuded it of its greatest glory and power. The Conference was undoubtedly right in taking up the whole Methodist economy as Wesley left it, and following on in his spirit, correcting what they found to be wrong, and supplying what was discovered to be deficient, until, by a vigilant observance of God's providential guidance, they were enabled to place the Connexion before the world as a great and influential section of Christ's universal church.

Another important arrangement, made at the Conference of 1791, merits special notice. It was resolved, "1. The Committee of every District in England and Scotland shall elect one of their body to form a Committee to draw up a plan for the stationing of the preachers in Great Britain; which Committee shall meet at the place where the Conference is held, three days in the week preceding the Conference, in order to draw up the above-

mentioned plan. 2. The Committee of every District in Ireland shall send one of their body to meet the delegate two days before the Irish Conference for the same purpose." * This was the origin of the Stationing Committee, which has been of essential and permanent use in the operations of Methodism.

Disciplinary action of the Conference of 1792.

At the Conference of 1792, the following emendations and additions were made respecting the operation of District Committees:—"*Q.* What further regulations shall be made concerning the management of the Districts? *A.* 1. All the preachers of every District respectively, who shall be present at the Conference from time to time, shall meet together as soon as possible after the stations of the preachers are finally settled, and choose a chairman for their District out of the present or absent members of the District Committee. 2. The chairman so chosen shall have authority to call a meeting of the Committee of his District, on any application of the preachers or people which appears to him to require it. But he must never individually interfere with any other Circuit but his own. 3. Whenever a chairman has received any complaint against a preacher, either from the preachers or the people, he shall send an exact account of the complaint in writing to the person accused, with the name of the accuser or accusers, before he calls a meeting of the District Committee to examine into the charge. 4. If it appear on just grounds to any superintendent, that the chairman of his District has been guilty of any crime or misdemeanour, or that he has neglected to call a meeting of the District Committee, when there were sufficient reasons for calling it, such superintendent shall have authority in that case to call a meeting of the District Committee, and to fix the

* Minutes, vol. i., p. 248.

time and place of meeting. The Committee thus assembled shall have power, if they judge necessary, to try the chairman; and, if found guilty, to suspend him from being a travelling preacher till the ensuing Conference, or to remove him from the office of a superintendent, or to depose him from the chair, and to elect another in his place." *

By these arrangements, means were provided, by which, on the complaint of either his brethren or the people, any preacher might be placed on his trial, and, if found guilty of improper conduct, be suspended, or otherwise dealt with, until the ensuing Conference.

These matters, however, were not at this time greatly regarded. The question of the sacraments was the question of the day, and absorbed almost every other in the estimation of the Methodist public. Intensity was given to this feeling by the announcement, that some of the preachers ordained by Wesley had been uniting to ordain others; so that there were growing up in the Connexion two classes of ministers, some ordained, and others unordained. The evil consequences of this practice were soon perceived. Several of the preachers, who had assisted in the ordination of some of their brethren, afterward deplored it as a great error. The people also in many places expressed themselves very strongly against the practice. The leading friends at Leeds had met just on the eve of this Conference, and drawn up a petition, in which they say, "We have heard, with painful concern, that some of the preachers in our Connexion have violated the Resolutions of the last Conference, by ordaining, or assisting in the ordination of, their brethren, and administering the ordinances; which has caused great animosities among the people, to the

* Minutes, vol. i., p. 259.

hindering of the work of God, and the destruction of brotherly love. Such conduct we deeply lament, and consider as highly reprehensible, and greatly prejudicial to that glorious work in which we are all engaged. We are persuaded that, if the same steps should be taken here, similar or even worse consequences would ensue. We therefore most earnestly entreat, that no ordained preachers, so called, (who have taken the steps above-mentioned,) may be appointed for our Circuit, unless they solemnly engage to desist from all pretensions to superiority over their brethren, confess their fault, and publicly declare their determination to return to, and uprightly abide by, the excellent plan of ancient Methodism, which the Almighty in His wisdom and mercy has been pleased so universally to bless."

The Conference carefully considered the subject, and placed the following on the Minutes:—"*Q.* What rules shall be made concerning ordinations? *A.* 1. No ordination shall take place in the Methodist Connexion without the consent of the Conference first obtained. 2. If any brother shall break the above-mentioned rule, by ordaining, or being ordained, without the consent of the Conference previously obtained, the brother so breaking the rule does thereby exclude himself."* This stringent regulation removed this cause of disquiet and irritation.

The measures of trustees and of the Conference of 1793.

Still the question respecting the sacraments agitated the Societies. As the year passed on, (1792–3,) it became certain that their entire prohibition could not be maintained; and several of the leading preachers on both sides met for the purpose of devising some plan for meeting the difficulty. A knowledge of these proceedings greatly

* Minutes, vol. i., p. 259.

irritated several of the trustees in different places, who were anxious to maintain the "Old Plan," and keep the Societies in union with the Church. Those of the Broadmead and Guinea Street chapels in Bristol, and of the New Chapel, London, issued a printed letter to the Conference, in which they accused the preachers of "a departure from the original plan of Methodism," with a design to make the Societies "separate churches," and to consummate the whole with disloyalty to the crown.

The Conference thought this document of sufficient importance to be answered in a separate circular letter, which was printed with the Minutes of the year. A letter had been previously issued respecting the administration of the sacraments; but the one now referred to was directed to the refutation of the slanderous imputations conveyed in the trustees' circular; and this purpose was fulfilled with remarkable force, temper, and Christian feeling.

Minor District Meeting.

At this Conference a further arrangement was made for the settlement of any dispute on the trial of an accused preacher, when the case might scarcely be of sufficient public importance to call together all the preachers in a District. It was resolved: "1. If any preacher be accused of immorality, the preacher accused and his accuser shall respectively choose two preachers of their District, and the chairman of the District shall, with the four preachers chosen as above, try the accused preacher; and they shall have authority, if he be found guilty, to suspend him till the ensuing Conference, if they judge it expedient. 2. If there be any difference between the preachers in a District, the respective parties shall choose two preachers; and the chairman of the District, with the

four preachers so chosen, shall be final arbiters to determine the matters in dispute." *

While the Conference was thus endeavouring to meet and to reconcile the conflicting wishes of the people with respect to the sacraments, and to consolidate the polity of the Connexion, other elements of discord were introduced, which still more powerfully shook the Connexion to its centre, and spread distrust and disaffection far and wide among the Societies. Long before the Conference of 1793 Mr. Kilham had put forth a document, which was extensively circulated amongst the influential members of the body, under the signatures of "Trueman and Freeman," in which he earnestly and strongly contended for the introduction of lay members into the District Meetings and into the Conference, as well as for the election of leaders by their classes, and the right of placing a preacher on his trial at any Quarterly Meeting; with other proposals of a similar character. Such suggestions, acting on the excited temper of the Connexion, could not but produce a great effect. Those of the people who desired the administration of the sacraments, and those who deprecated their introduction, saw in these proposals means by which their individual arguments and energy might be brought to bear on the object of their desires. Dissatisfaction with the existing institutions of Methodism, and desires for extensive and radical changes, were increased to a very serious extent.

Project for a Wesleyan Methodist hierarchy.

But while this mischievous influence was gradually sapping the foundation of all established rule and order, an opposite evil, scarcely less dangerous, was assailing the highest classes of the Methodist ministry. The senior preachers at the time of Wesley's death had been trained up in entire disrelish for Presbyterianism; all their

* Minutes, vol. i., p. 277.

partialities and prejudices were in favour of an episcopal form of church government. When their head, who had always acted as their archbishop, was at length removed, it cannot be matter of surprise that they should feel as if all real legitimate authority had ceased among them. Neither the Conference as a whole, nor the District Committees, had as yet earned general confidence in the exercise of actual ruling authority. Hence we find Mr. Pawson, while president of the Conference, in December, 1793, writing, "At present we really have no government." Under a conviction of this defect, a plan was devised for remodelling the constitution of Methodism, and introducing a kind of hierarchy, to consist of three orders of ministers,—Superintendents, Elders, and Deacons. This plan is attributed to Dr. Coke, who made it known to a select number of the senior preachers. Mr. Pawson took a very active part in these negotiations, and on the 13th of December, 1793, wrote to his friend Atmore: "It will by no means answer our ends to dispute one with another, as to which is the most scriptural form of church government. We should consider our present circumstances, and endeavour to agree upon some method by which our people may have the ordinances of God, and at the same time be preserved from division. I care not a rush whether it be Episcopal or Presbyterian. I believe neither of them to be purely scriptural: but our preachers and people in general are prejudiced against the latter; consequently, if the former will answer our end, we ought to embrace it. Indeed, I believe it will suit our present plan far better than the other. The design of Mr. Wesley will weigh much with many; which now evidently appears to have been this:—He foresaw that the Methodists would, after his death, soon become a distinct people. He

was deeply prejudiced against a Presbyterian, and was as much in favour of an Episcopal, form of government. In order, therefore, to preserve all that was valuable in the Church of England among the Methodists, he ordained Mr. Mather and Dr. Coke bishops. These he undoubtedly designed should ordain others. Mr. Mather told us so at the Manchester Conference; but we did not then understand him. I see no way of coming to any good settlement but on the plan I mentioned before. I sincerely wish that Dr. Coke and Mr. Mather may be allowed to be what they are, bishops; that they ordain two others chosen by the Conference; that these four have the government of the Connexion placed in their hands for one year, each superintending his respective District, being stationed in London, Bristol, Leeds, and Newcastle. We can give what degree of power we please; but I would not cramp them. If any should abuse the power given, woe be to them! They would not be intrusted with it again! And even supposing these four had authority to station the preachers, who would have any cause to fear? We must have ordination among us at any rate." *

These were the views which obtained amongst some of the most liberal and enlightened Methodist preachers of that day; and, having settled the preliminaries, they proposed a private conference, for full discussion. At first Birmingham was thought of, and afterwards, by an unaccountable obliquity of vision, Lichfield was selected, because Methodism had not been introduced into that city. As if a meeting of eight or ten Methodist preachers at an inn, in a town where Methodism had no standing, was likely to pass unnoticed! † However, at the appointed time,

The Lichfield meeting.

* MS. letter.

† Some of the active spirits in the agitation stated that the presence of

Dr. Coke, Alexander Mather, Thomas Taylor, John Pawson, Samuel Bradburn, James Rogers, Henry Moore, and Adam Clarke, met at an hotel in Lichfield. Dr. Coke opened the business by speaking of the unhappy differences which existed in England respecting the administration of the Sacraments in Methodist chapels, and urged that in the estimation of many persons this difference of opinion was greatly aggravated by the want of ordination by the imposition of hands. He then stated that he believed the entire absence of all these evils among the American Methodists arose from the church government which had been given them by Wesley. The doctor proposed that, as he had himself been ordained by the imposition of hands for the full pastoral office in America, he should confer the office of presbyter on the brethren present who had not been ordained. This, he believed, would be agreeable to the Societies at large; and the holy sacraments could then be administered. The subject was discussed, and most of the preachers expressed their satisfaction with the proposed plan. Mr. Moore approved the substance of it as a suitable arrangement for the government of any Christian church, but contended that as Methodist preachers they could not take a step so deeply affecting the interests of Methodism, without first consulting the Conference, as their

these eight grave men, all strangers, and meeting in secret deliberation, excited suspicion, and that the magistrates and local authorities gave orders to watch their proceedings. This is not at all improbable, when we consider the political uneasiness of the times. It was also said that a commercial traveller, who happened to know one or more of them, came to the hotel, and published abroad the secret that they were a band of Methodist preachers. This awkward announcement is supposed to have shortened their sittings, and hastened their departure. Bradburn was wont to say, that the meeting commenced on the *first of April*. This is very likely, as their Resolutions are dated the second of that month.

supreme court. He therefore moved, "That the subject stand over till the ensuing Conference." Mr. Mather followed on the same side, and denounced any intermediate ordination, as decidedly "unmethodistical and wrong."

Yet notwithstanding this difference of opinion as to the propriety of immediate action, all parties concurred in the adoption of certain resolutions which were signed by the persons present at the meeting, and which they agreed to submit to the next Conference.*

The Conference of 1794, and the trustees' delegates.

As the Conference of 1794 drew near, the excitement and anxiety in the Connexion greatly increased. The trustees, as representing the interests of the people, now came prominently forward, and claimed not only a *veto* on the administration of the Sacraments in the chapels, but a larger influence and power in directing the affairs of the Connexion. For the purpose of asserting and maintaining these claims, a delegation of trustees met at Bristol. At the opening of the Conference they presented an address, complaining of the divided state of the Societies, and of proposals for some new code of law, and form of government, concocted by the Lichfield meeting. They recommended that some plan should be adopted which would put an end to disturbances; that some security be given for the fulfilment of the declarations of Conference with regard to the ordinances; that the preachers lay aside all ecclesiastical titles, administering the Sacrament, ordination, &c.; and that they divide the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Body between the preachers and themselves. They concluded by declaring their attachment to the preachers, and their deep concern for the prosperity of the

* We give at length in the Appendix a carefully revised transcript of these resolutions, from a copy in the handwriting of Dr. Clarke, who acted as secretary to the meeting. (See Appendix G.)

work. This address was seriously and patiently considered by the Conference, who were strongly disposed to adopt a course which would restore peace to the Connexion. But, how was this to be done? The trustees, although professing to represent the laity, were asking for a prohibition of what thousands of the most pious and influential members of Society throughout the country demanded as their undoubted Christian right. They, in fact, represented the High-Church lay aristocracy of Methodism, and must be carefully distinguished from the people in general, and especially from the democratic party of Mr. Kilham. These gentlemen, exceedingly powerful, as representing the wealth and worldly respectability of Methodism, wished, in virtue of their position as trustees, equally to rule the preachers and the laity. In this difficulty, Mr. Benson moved, "That the Conference do confirm and ratify the declaration of last year respecting the Sacrament." Bnt on Wednesday Mr. Mather read a letter, which he submitted to the Conference as an answer to the trustees. This was approved, and sent; and on the following Saturday an answer was returned, in which the trustees still earnestly requested "that ordination, the administering of the sacraments, burying the dead, &c., be laid aside." A committee was then appointed to communicate with them, for the purpose, if possible, of effecting a reconciliation.

Meanwhile, the resolutions of the Lichfield meeting were introduced into the Conference, discussed, and speedily rejected, "as tending to create invidious and unhallowed distinctions among brethren." The Conference again affirmed the principle, which it adopted from the argument of Mr. Benson, at the first Conference after Wesley's death,—that imposition of hands was merely a circumstance, suitable and significant, but not essential to ordination;

the act of admission into the ministry, so as to be devoted wholly to it, and to exercise the pastoral charge, being the true scriptural ordination, both to preach the word, and to administer the Sacraments.

This Conference did its utmost to meet the wishes of the assembled trustees, and made considerable concessions. These were published in a circular to the Societies signed by the President and Secretary, dated "August 8th, 1794." This we have transcribed at length.* It re-enacted the rule of the preceding Conference against ecclesiastical titles, gowns, bands, &c. Preaching in church hours was prohibited, except in very special cases. The Lord's Supper was not to be administered in future, where the union and concord of the Society could be maintained without it; and preachers were not to baptize, except for the desirable ends of love and harmony. Then it was decreed, that the temporal and spiritual affairs of the Societies "shall be separated as far as the purposes of peace and harmony can be answered thereby;" the temporal affairs being confided to the stewards, who are to keep proper accounts for sums received and disbursed for their respective Societies; while the spiritual concerns shall be managed by the preachers, "who have ever appointed leaders, chosen stewards, and admitted members, and expelled them from the Society, consulting their brethren the stewards and leaders." It was decided that the trustees, with the assistant preacher, who shall have one vote only, shall choose their own stewards, and transact all the pecuniary business pertaining to their respective chapel trusts. It was also decided, that "no trustee, however accused, shall be removed from the Society, unless his crime or breach of the rules of the Society be proved in the presence of the

* See Appendix H.

trustees and leaders." And further, that "if any preacher be accused of immorality, a meeting shall be called of all the preachers, trustees, stewards, and leaders of the Circuit in which the accused preacher labours; and if the charge be proved to the satisfaction of the majority of such meeting, the chairman of the District in which that preacher is situated shall remove the convicted preacher from the Circuit, on the request of the majority of the meeting: nevertheless, an appeal on either side to the Conference shall remain."

Besides these conciliatory arrangements, measures were taken which, it was believed, would promote peace and concord throughout the Connexion, and especially at Bristol. The names of all the chapels to which leave had been given for the administration of the Sacraments were printed in the Minutes; and amongst these were Portland chapel, Kingswood, Marsh, and Shays or Winterburne, in the Bristol Circuit. Mr. Vasey was appointed to Bristol to administer the sacraments, with Mr. Moore to assist him at Portland.

The contest between the trustees and the authority of the Conference at Bristol.

But all these hopes were vain. As stated in a previous chapter, the trustees of the Old Chapel in Bristol were very indignant at the countenance given to the desire for the introduction of the Sacraments into the Methodist chapels. They saw on these "Minutes" more than ninety places, to which this privilege was accorded by the Conference. In the hope of checking this progress, they took the decisive step which placed them and the Conference in direct collision.*

Considered as the act of a single body of trustees, this expulsion of a preacher from a chapel to which he had been formally appointed by the Conference, was calculated to

* See *ante*, p. 26.

excite great alarm in the mind of every one who wished for the perpetuation of Methodism and of its itinerant ministry. But it becomes a much more serious matter, when we are told by well-informed persons, who had every means of knowing the case fully, that it was evident "there was a combination of trustees formed against the liberty and independence of the preachers."* All the circumstances of the case sustain this judgment as to the actual combination of the trustees. They saw that the legal operation of the Deed of Declaration gave the Conference the appointment of the preachers to Methodist pulpits; and that this power really conferred supreme jurisdiction in all Methodist affairs. This the trustees were by no means prepared to admit and endure, especially as the Conference, after withstanding much importunity, had at length shown a disposition to meet the wishes of the people to a moderate extent, by allowing the Lord's Supper to be administered in chapels where the Societies urgently required it. Determined to resist this concession to the utmost, the trustees combined for the purpose of wresting, at least, a part of this power from the preachers, by securing a veto on the occupancy of certain chapels, whose trust-deeds were loosely drawn. Bristol was selected as a place for the struggle, and with good reason. The Deeds of the Room, and of Guinea Street chapel, had not been prepared agreeably to Wesley's wishes: he had endeavoured to rectify them, but had always been thwarted. Here too the trustees, intensely opposed to the administration of the Sacraments, hoped that great numbers amongst the people would heartily support them in their new course.

Under such circumstances, the legal notice was served on Mr. Moore. Benson had been appointed the super-

* Rev. Jonathan Crowther's "Truth and Matter of Fact," p. 5. 1794.

intendent of the Circuit, with Rodda, Vasey, and Moore Mr. Vasey was appointed because, being a clergyman, he could administer the Sacraments without offending the prejudices of any. All these preachers, with the exception of Moore, were known to hold views respecting the sacramental question very similar to those entertained by the trustees: their support was accordingly counted on in the struggle; and the presumption was well founded; for, on the expulsion of Moore from the Old Room, we do not hear of any protest from Benson, as the superintendent, against this arbitrary conduct of the trustees; nor did he and the other preachers object to preach in these chapels until Moore was also allowed to do so. Some measure of this sort might have been expected, and might have put down the schism. Benson, Rodda, and Vasey continued in harmonious operation with the trustees, preached regularly in their chapels, and, as far as they could, conducted the affairs of the Circuit as if nothing unusual had taken place.

But if the trustees in this contest counted largely on the support of the people, they were greatly mistaken. The vast majority of the Society and congregation immediately abandoned the chapels, and took steps for providing a suitable place of worship in the neighbourhood. Nor was Moore forsaken by his brethren. Dr. Coke came to Bristol to concert measures for the preservation of the bulk of the Society, who had left the Room and Guinea Street chapel. Moore was also assisted by the Rev. Jonathan Crowther, who had been appointed by the last Conference to the West Indies, but was unable to proceed to his appointment, as no convoy for that destination had been prepared. Being, in consequence, at liberty to employ himself somewhere in this country,

and believing Moore to be engaged in a contest "for the whole Methodist Connexion," Crowther joined him, and laboured to support the cause in which he was engaged. Benson, Rodda, and Vasey, preached in the chapels over which the trustees claimed absolute power, and in the other places where they were received; and Dr. Coke, Moore, and Crowther, had their head-quarters at Portland Street, ministering there and in other places through the Circuit principally to those opposed to the conduct of the trustees, and who wished to maintain the right of the Conference to appoint preachers to all Methodist pulpits. The eyes of the whole Connexion were therefore turned to Bristol, and fixed on the persons engaged in this struggle; and their sympathies were drawn towards the one party or the other, according to the respective views and opinions of individual observers. The progress and result of this contest will be best seen by a reference to the several circulars and documents issued by the parties and their adherents and sympathizers throughout the country.

Circular letters connected with the contest in Bristol.

Mr. Moore thought it necessary to place the true state of the case before the Connexion. A sheet was published, which set forth the principal facts already given, and stated "that on the 12th, the day following that on which he was expelled from the chapel, he attended the regular Leaders' Meeting, the trustees also being present: when, after the regular business, Mr. Moore observed that, as the Leaders' Meeting was the proper place to bring forward any accusation against a preacher, he desired to know whether any person had a charge to prefer against him. After a long silence, one of the trustees said, 'Sir, we have a legal right to appoint preachers for these chapels. We have appointed three, and we do not choose to appoint a fourth.' Mr. Moore replied, that 'if they acted as men separated from, and

independent of, the Methodist Connexion, the answer was proper; but, if they professed themselves members of it, their answer was altogether improper; for it tended to the total overthrow of Methodism.' He therefore again asked whether they had any charge to prefer against him. A total silence was the only answer to this. It therefore appeared to all assembled, that the only cause of this violent measure, equally injurious to the Conference, the stewards, leaders, people, and Mr. Moore, was his assisting in the administration of the Lord's Supper, at Portland chapel, the Sunday before."

This publication shows that Wesley, during his life, felt most anxious to correct the anomalous character of the Bristol Deed, and once obtained a promise from the trustees that it should be altered, which he recorded in his Journal.*

"This agreement," the document proceeds, "they never would fulfil, which exceedingly pained our venerable father; and we feel the afflicting consequences. Not content with enjoying *their own* Christian privileges and trust rights in their fullest extent, without any restraint or molestation whatsoever; they have invaded ours, and have expelled from their houses a member of the Conference, (against whom they could bring no shadow of complaint,) merely because he assisted in the administration of a sacred ordinance, with respect to which human compulsion is an abomination."

This circular concludes:—"We have also to praise the Lord on another account. We have gotten by

* "Monday the 14th," (September, 1788,) "I returned to Bristol; Saturday the 20th, I met the trustees for the new room, who were all willing to add a codicil to the Deed of Trust, in order to ascertain to the Conference (after me) the sole right of appointing the preachers in it."

a remarkable providence a large piece of ground, within a small distance of the room in the Horsefair; and, as the people are all zealous in this important matter, we trust to have a chapel soon erected, (we hope also soon to have another in the neighbourhood of Guinea Street,) such as Bristol has not known in our Connexion. And as we honour the memory of our late father, (as well as his sons in the Gospel,) it shall be settled in that way which was recommended by him, so that no member of your Body shall ever be expelled from it, merely because it is the pleasure of a few oppressive men."

This document was signed by nine trustees and stewards, and by the leaders of forty-four classes out of fifty-two of which the Bristol Society was composed; and countersigned by Thomas Coke, Samuel Bradburn, Thomas Rutherford, and Richard Elliott, who appended the following before they signed their names: "We the undersigned, some of whom were eye-witnesses to the facts above stated, and all of whom have strictly inquired into the whole of the proceedings, are perfectly satisfied with the above statement. We were all present at the meeting of the whole Society, in which that statement was read and signed, and know that it expresses the mind of the people."

This document bears date "August 18th," only a very few days after the termination of the Conference. The copy now before us has on the fly-leaf an autograph note in the handwriting of Dr. Coke, dated a week later, and signed by himself, Moore, and Rutherford. Referring to the allusion in the circular to the erection of a chapel, he says, "Last Tuesday we began to build, and shall have a noble chapel in the Horse-fair *for the Conference*, the Lord being our Helper. God is with us, and the people are with us, and

every preacher who regards the right of the Conference to station the preachers will surely be with us also. Such an attack *on that right*, on liberty of conscience, and on justice, has not, we think, been known before in the annals of Methodism.....But, blessed be God, trustee tyranny is now at an end in Bristol! The people would not submit themselves to those men, if we would."

On the 30th of August another circular was addressed to the preachers, and sent throughout the Connexion, containing a formal reply to that so largely quoted above. It bore no signatures, but was said to be "published by order of the Bristol trustees." This paper begins: "A partial and erroneous 'statement of facts' having been laid before you, respecting the expulsion of Mr. Moore from the Bristol chapels by the trustees, it becomes highly necessary that *the real state of the case* should be known."

The authors charge Moore and Bradburn with continued attempts to disturb the peace of the Society at Bristol, in 1790–93, by raising a party in favour of "the ordination scheme," and erecting Portland chapel for service in church hours, and the administration of the sacraments. They contend that Moore's conduct quite justified the trustees in refusing to have him as a minister, because they were bound by the provisions of their Deed of Trust to appoint "preachers every month," and they had cordially received three out of four preachers appointed by the Conference. They close with the following paragraph:—

"The public at large will also consider, that those three preachers appointed by the Conference, and accepted by the trustees, are all of them old members, whose names appear in the *original* Conference Deed, and to whom *the most sacred privileges* of the Conference must be as clear as to Mr. Moore or any of his party. But, willing to support

the Methodist interest on the *old tried foundation*, they could not permit one of the oldest Societies in the kingdom to be torn to pieces to satisfy the caprice or obstinacy of one man, and eventually to lose them from the Methodist Connexion. And it is hoped the Conference will never encourage or suffer any of their members *to act contrary to their own rules*:—to go into Circuits and lay baits for the unwary, to draw them away from their original professions and simplicity,—to make parties and sow the seeds of discord among the peaceable inhabitants,—to set families and friends one against another,—(*all of which have been done in Bristol,*)—when the matter in contention is allowed by themselves—*not to be necessary to salvation.*"

In order to form a just opinion of this struggle, and of these conflicting allegations, it must be remembered that Benson, Rodda, and Vasey, although excellent men and very able ministers, were the chosen ones of the trustees, and not of the Society. Mr. Moore, as we are assured by a competent witness, "was the only preacher of the people's choice." The people therefore very reasonably said, "Expelling the minister we prefer, is, in fact, expelling us also from the chapel to which we have as much proper right as they themselves who have done this deed. We have not entered into the Methodist Society on such terms as to have trustees to rule over us and our preachers."*

Another circular letter published by the trustees, and addressed to the preachers, was dated "September 9th." They indignantly repel the allegation, that they wished to divide the preachers, and to throw off the authority of the Conference. They retort the charge on the preachers, leaders, and people of Portland. They admit rejecting

* "The Point stated. By BENJAMIN RHODES. 1795," p. 5.

Mr. Moore, which they were legally authorized by their Deed to do; and declare that their opponents had in many instances thrown off the authority of the Conference, and set its rules at defiance. As, for instance, they had shut Benson, Rodda, and Vasey out of Portland chapel, although bound to receive whomsoever the Conference should appoint: they had purchased a piece of ground, and begun to build a chapel, without the consent of the Conference or of any District Meeting: they had also interfered with and obstructed the superintendent of the Circuit in his work, and had called in and retained preachers whom the Conference had appointed to other spheres of labour, to supply the chapels from which they had excluded the regularly appointed ministers. Benson, Rodda, and Vasey attached a short paragraph to this address, in which they commend these statements of the trustees to the preachers throughout the Connexion; at the same time declaring, that they had taken no step which they could not justify to their brethren.

These statements produced a reply from Mr. Moore, dated "September 13th," in which he formally meets the allegations put forth by the trustees in their two circulars. In allusion to their denial of any wish to divide the preachers, he admits that it may be so *now*, as, after having made mighty efforts to induce a great number of preachers to espouse their cause, they had utterly failed; so that, with the very few who adhered to them, a division would be to them very undesirable.

Mr. Moore and his friends were now convinced that, however necessary the course they had taken might be to the general interests of the Connexion, they had been led in so many instances to depart from established rule by the

difficulties which surrounded them, that it would be needful to submit the whole case to a legally constituted tribunal, that it might judge whether the strange and peculiar circumstances in which they were placed were sufficient to justify these serious violations of connexional law. Mr. Moore, therefore, summoned a meeting of the preachers of the District. Mr. William Thompson, the first president after the death of Wesley, and who earnestly supported Benson in this affair, came from London to be present. It was first proposed, "That the trustees of no chapel ought to have power to refuse the preachers the Conference appoint, or to place and displace preachers." This sweeping enunciation of a sound abstract Methodistic principle was resisted by Mr. Moore as well as by the adverse party, inasmuch as it would condemn the trustees of Portland chapel equally with those of the Room. Afterward Mr. Benson proposed the following terms of reconciliation between the contending parties:—

Deliberations and decision of the District Meeting on the Bristol disputes.

"1. All past things to be forgotten, and *reproachful* and *abusive* expressions to be avoided on both sides, especially from the pulpit.

"2. On condition that Mr. Moore forbears to assist in the administration of the sacrament at Portland chapel, the trustees shall revoke the prohibition sent to him, respecting preaching in the Room and Guinea Street chapel.

"3. That the trustees shall engage to allow the appointment of preachers for *Bristol*, as well as other parts of the kingdom, to remain with the Conference; and that they will receive the preachers the Conference appoint, reserving to themselves *a negative only* in the cases of *immorality*, or of *false doctrine*, clearly proved to the satisfaction of the majority of the trustees, stewards, and leaders; on condition that no service shall be held in church hours, or the

Lord's Supper administered at the Room or at Guinea Street chapel, except by a clergyman of the Church of England, and with the approbation of a majority of the trustees; and that the sacrament shall not be administered even at Portland chapel, except by a clergyman, at least till the Society are *unanimous* for its being administered by the lay preachers.

"4. In case the preachers should be hereafter so divided, that either there should be *no Conference*, or there should be two or more Conferences, that then the trustees should be at full liberty to appoint preachers to occupy their chapels, as the Deeds direct.

"5. That these propositions are to be acceded to, on condition that not only all past things are to be forgotten, but that all buildings are to cease, so as to bring all things back to the same ground on which they stood before the dispute began."

These propositions the District Meeting regarded as inadmissible. Mr. Thompson, exceedingly anxious that some measure conducive to peace and amity should be adopted before he left the meeting, conversed with Benson and the preachers who thought with him, and also with the trustees, and submitted the following as a new proposition:—"As the District Meeting chooses to reject the proposals of the trustees respecting the Lord's Supper being administered by a clergyman *only*, it is now proposed that Portland chapel, with all that incline to worship there, and all other places of the Bristol Circuit where the people are of the same mind, be added to another Circuit, or made a separate Circuit; as they have no objection, in case that is done, to lay preachers, or any others that choose, administering the Lord's Supper, in that chapel, whensoever, and as often soever as, is judged proper or con-

venient." This proposition, like the former, was opposed and rejected.*

The meeting then considered the whole case, and, with the exception of Benson and his two colleagues, came to an unanimous resolution, approving Moore's conduct throughout; and at the same time expressing its opinion, "that Messrs. Benson, Rodda, and Vasey had virtually seceded from the Connexion by sanctioning the proceedings of the disaffected trustees." †

From these decisions it is evident, that the Bristol District Meeting regarded this dispute as one between the bulk of the people and the majority of the preachers on one hand, and the trustees with a few preachers and people on the other; the object of contention being, whether the Conference should be the supreme authority in the Connexion, or whether its decisions should be directed or coerced by the power of the trustees.

These decisions of course gave great offence to the trustees and their sympathizers, and led to a proposal for calling an extraordinary sitting of the Conference, to consider and settle the matters in dispute. This proposal was set aside by a most important circular letter addressed to the preachers by Thomas Hanby and John Pawson. These eminent ministers very forcibly exhibit in sixteen propositions the unreasonableness of any extraordinary meeting of the Conference; and the unjustifiable conduct of the trustees, who, because Wesley had assigned them a chapel entirely his own, afterward refused to make such alteration in the Deed as he saw to be necessary, and now used their improperly retained power to coerce the Conference. They state that out of one thousand members, of which the

Important circular of Thomas Hanby and John Pawson.

* Benson, Rodda, and Vasey's circular of September 16th, 1794.

† "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1845," p. 321.

Society in Bristol was composed, eight hundred and seven adhered to Mr. Moore and the cause of the preachers. They maintain that the trustees of Bristol are not entitled to more power or influence than the trustees generally throughout the kingdom; and that, if the powers demanded were awarded to trustees generally, there would be an end of Methodist itinerancy for ever.

Other documents.

This conflict was felt to be no mere local matter, but a question of vital moment to the general interests of Methodism. Reference might be made to several publications issued at the time; but we notice two only. The first is an address to the Methodists of Cornwall, with two letters, —the first to Mr. Benson, the second to Mr. William Thompson,—by Richard Williams, an able and very energetic local preacher of Cornwall, who, in language forcible, although not very elegant or accurate, sets forth the impolicy and impropriety of these violent contentions about ordinances. The second is a remarkably clear and clever letter addressed to the preachers by the venerable Alexander Mather.

After appealing to their knowledge of his character, he contends that those members of Society who conscientiously object to the administration of the sacraments by unordained ministers in Methodist chapels, are as much entitled to respect and Christian forbearance as those who plead a conscientious desire for such administration. He insists on the propriety and necessity of the Conference abstaining from giving any encouragement to any part of a Society who may be disposed to build chapels in opposition to the other part. Having prepared the way, he proceeds to consider the Bristol case. He alludes to the conciliatory course adopted by the Conference in regard to the trustees of the Orphan House at Newcastle, and urges that, if the

same kind course had been taken with the trustees of Bristol, all this rancour, bitterness, and mischief might have been avoided. The scope and tenor of the letter are in favour of the trustees; and, at the close, Mr. William Thompson signifies his approbation of the sentiments expressed by Mather.

But the production of circular letters on this exciting subject was not long limited to individuals. The preachers in Cornwall met, and passed a series of Resolutions in which they pronounce those disputes detrimental to the whole Connexion. They then propound a plan for the settlement of the dispute, which embraces everything but the alleged ground of all the disunion,—the administration of the Sacraments by unordained preachers. The trustees of Manchester and Stockport published a circular, in which they approved and commended the act of the Bristol trustees in the expulsion of Mr. Moore from the Room, and intimated their wish to form a combination of trustees to support them in their struggle. This paper was replied to by the trustees, leaders, and local preachers of Liverpool, and also by the local preachers of Leeds: these letters exhibit decidedly opposite sentiments. After expressing confidence in the decision of the Bristol District Meeting, and condemning the manner in which blame is cast on Mr. Moore and his friends, the Liverpool officials say, "You inform us, that you are friends to ancient Methodism, and the good old way. We believe that some of you are, and we most cordially unite with you on this ground. But we are sorry to inform you, that we stand in doubt respecting some whose names appear in your letter: charity itself will not enable us to believe, that men who have long ago left our Connexion, men who meet in no class, seldom attend the preaching, do

not believe our doctrine, &c., are at all likely to be the most deeply concerned to support the cause of God among us." They close with expressing fear, lest "the combination" which the trustees were endeavouring to form would deprive them of the blessed privileges which they enjoyed. The Leeds local preachers give an elaborate reply to the arguments of the Manchester trustees, and conclude by advising them "not to call together the trustees of chapels to meddle in matters unconnected with their trusts."

Towards the close of 1794, the venerable John Murlin printed and circulated among the preachers a Letter to Mr. Benson. He says, after reading the papers issued on both sides, "I apprehend the ground of the dispute between them to consist of two points: First, one party insist on primitive Methodism; the other party plead for liberty of conscience. Secondly, one party insist on the Old Plan; the other party believe (if they follow Mr. Wesley's example) they may improve on the Old Plan." He then goes on to prove from the continual succession of changes introduced into Methodism by Wesley during his lifetime, that it was impossible to define "primitive Methodism," or to exhibit any "Old Plan." He then insists that Mr. Wesley during his life had made arrangements, (such, for instance, as empowering Dr. Coke and Alexander Mather to ordain ministers,) which were intended to produce further changes after his death. He expresses his confident belief that old preachers who have not been ordained have as much right to administer the sacraments as those who have. He concludes by recommending mutual love and forbearance. The whole letter shows that the Bristol trustees had no ground for the violent action they had taken; and teaches that those who desired the introduction of change should proceed with great kindness and caution.

Increased excitement spreads throughout the Connexion.

With the beginning of 1795 the excitement throughout the Connexion acquired greater intensity, which continued to increase until the Conference of that year, and resulted, according to the usual fashion of the times, in the issue of numerous circulars. Many of these now lie before us. We will briefly refer to the tenor of a few of the most important.

The trustees, leaders, stewards, and local preachers of the Launceston Circuit embodied their views in a circular to the preachers. They protest against the conduct of the Bristol trustees; but, at the same time, contend for a *veto* to be exercised by the trustees, and the stewards and leaders, either assembled together, or, which they seem to prefer, the trustees in their meeting, and the stewards and leaders in theirs; and when these two bodies separately decided that a preacher was objectionable on the ground of doctrines, morals, or gifts, they thought he ought to be rejected, or, at least, removed from that Circuit.

A broad-sheet was circulated among the preachers early in March, bearing the signature of "A Member of the Conference." This document earnestly defends Mr. Moore and condemns the trustees; but it is chiefly remarkable for the violence with which it assails Mr. Benson. Charging him with envying Mr. Bradburn, and aspiring to supremacy in the Connexion, it insinuates that he fostered the disaffection of the trustees, that by these means he might rise to power. Altogether, the spirit of this piece is most objectionable.

The preachers in the Aberdeen District, after the close of the usual business in their District Meeting, drew up a series of twenty-nine recommendations, intended to form the basis of a new constitution for the Connexion. With the

exception of some strange and impracticable suggestions, (such as the periodical election and change of trustees, periodical election of leaders, &c.,) these are what would be regarded as a liberal exposition of the Methodist system. And all this might be expected, when it is known that Alexander Kilham was the secretary of that District, and consequently the person who drew up this paper.

It is scarcely possible to realize the extent and intensity of the disunion and strife occasioned by the conflicting views, feelings, and objects, between the adverse parties, and fanned into a flame by these numerous circulars. The trustees, to a great extent, throughout the Connexion, took advantage of the controversy respecting the sacraments, and the violent disputes at Bristol, in order to secure to themselves a larger measure of power in the government of the Body than they previously possessed, or than belonged to their office. They were even determined to press their design, although it should result in a great division of the Connexion. This was the conclusion to which some of the most influential and best informed of the preachers were led by the proceedings they witnessed. Mr. Pawson says, "That several of the trustees of some of our chapels have formed a design to divide us, is too evident to be denied."* And Mr. Rhodes observes, "Some of the trustees there," (at Bristol,) "laid plans to divide the body of preachers (for what purpose they know). Their scheme transpired."† It was this conviction which led Mr. Crowther to express himself so strongly as to write, that "this was the grand crisis of Methodism; and I have no scruple in saying,

* Pawson's "Affectionate Address," p. 3.

† Rhodes's "Point stated," p. 8.

that the success of Mr. Moore and his friends was, in one sense, the salvation of the Connexion." *

Formidable combination of trustees.

Notwithstanding the adverse replies to the Manchester, Salford, and Stockport address, the efforts of the trustees were very great, and the encouragement which they received very considerable. As they urged their appeal on the sacred ground of "Old Methodism" and "the plan of Wesley," great numbers in every part of the kingdom sympathized with their professions. Their circular was responded to with more or less approbation, but generally with the fullest approval and most earnest zeal. †

The preachers and people determine to support the Conference. Arrangements for an accommodation.

But whilst this extensive combination of trustees was being organized for obtaining a powerful influence in the Connexion, it became evident that the majority of the preachers and people entertained different views, and were determined to resist the threatened encroachment. Bristol, the principal seat of the struggle, may, indeed, be regarded as representing the general state of opinion and feeling throughout the Connexion. There the great majority of the Society evinced the strongest determination to secure two things:—first, to resist the *veto* on the appointment of preachers claimed by the trustees, and to vindicate the absolute right of the Conference to station the preachers; and, secondly, to insist on the right of the Methodist

* Crowther's "Portraiture of Methodism," p. 133.

† Among others, by the trustees of Dudley, Tipton, Penzance, Chester, Pontefract, Redruth, Birmingham, Dewsbury, Liverpool, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Keighley, Tadcaster, Burslem, Newcastle, and Tunstal; Wakefield, Otley, Pateley Bridge, and Lofthouse; City Road, London; Falmouth, Scarborough, Congleton, Warrington, Leeds, Darlington, Bridlington Quay, Hull, Wednesbury, Stockton, Malton, Sheffield, Darlaston, Bolton-le-Moors, St. Austle, Preston, Worcester, Howden, Halifax, Pocklington, and Market Weighton; Birstal, Bramley, York, Armley, Easingwold, Bradford, New Mills, Bullock Smithy, and Macclesfield.

Societies to all the ordinances and privileges of a Christian Church.

Nor was the result of this contest long doubtful. The people, with Mr. Moore and those preachers who assisted him, immediately made preparations for erecting a place of worship suitable for the Bristol congregation and Society, instead of that from which they had been expelled. Ground was procured, and a large and handsome chapel, significantly called Eben-ezer, was built in King Street. As it virtually superseded the old chapel in Broadmead, the trustees, with only a fragment of the Society, although supported by the powerful ministry of Benson and his colleagues, saw that a division would be fatal to their hopes, and almost to their existence as a body. An accommodation between the contending parties was therefore both necessary and desirable. Benson put himself in communication with Moore for the purpose of devising some plan of agreement; and Pawson, Mather, and Dr. Coke, drew up and circulated in manuscript "Humble Proposals for Peace." The copy of this document which lies before us is accompanied by an autograph note of Dr. Coke's. The "proposals" are moderate and conciliatory; and were followed in the month of May by an "Address to the Methodist Body at large and the Preachers in particular," bearing the signatures of Alexander Mather, William Thompson, and Joseph Benson.

It earnestly exhibits the blessings of peace in a Christian church, and the duty of restoring and maintaining it; sets forth, in eight particulars, the evils that would result from a division of the Societies; and offers various recommendations for such modifications of existing rules and usages as were likely to be generally received, and to restore unity to the Connexion.

The Conference of 1795. Division between the trustee delegates. They separate into two sections.

Several other circulars and pamphlets appeared on both sides; and, while the public mind of Methodism was thus excited, the Conference met at Manchester. A number of trustees also assembled there as delegates from the several trusts. A Committee was chosen in the Conference to prepare some plan for recommending such emendations of the disciplinary regulations as should give general satisfaction. Meanwhile the delegated trustees met, and entered upon their deliberations. But it soon appeared that they were greatly divided in opinion and purpose. One section, who shared the sentiments of the Bristol trustees, and were principally High-Church Tories, were most anxious to urge the Conference to enforce a sort of Act of Uniformity, by which the Societies might be brought back to the usages of Wesley's days, or to what they called the original plan of Methodism. Another party, consisting in part of political Liberals or semi-Liberals, were only anxious to extend the privilege of receiving the sacrament in church or chapel, according to the wishes of the people in various places; while each party desired the infusion of a larger measure of the lay element into the government of the Connexion. This difference of opinion occasioned such warm controversy, that they found it impossible to act in concert. They accordingly separated, and met in different places, each party looking to its own objects.

After spending six successive evenings in earnest deliberation, the Committee submitted several propositions to the Conference. They were considered, and sent to the trustees, who proposed certain alterations. The Conference then appointed a few preachers to confer with the trustees. By these means a certain number of regulations,

which satisfied all parties, were prepared, and fully adopted by the Conference.*

Satisfactory termination of these disputes by the Plan of Pacification.

The extent to which these measures gave satisfaction, may be judged from the following testimonies. The section of the trustees which advocated the views of those of Bristol, sent the subjoined communication, thanking the Conference for their attention to the propositions which they had laid before them; while the other section of the delegates were equally forward to express their sense of the courtesy they had received.† And even Alexander Kilham said that he

* See Appendix I.

† "RESOLVED, That the thanks of this Meeting be unanimously given to the president and the members of the Conference, for their kind attention to the business of the delegation of the trustees that has been laid before them.

"Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Conference, signed by the president and secretary.

"MATTHEW MAYER,
WILLIAM PRICE."

"*Committee Room of Delegates,*
"*August 4th,* 1795."

"TO THE METHODIST PREACHERS ASSEMBLED IN CONFERENCE.

"DEAR AND HONOURED FATHERS AND BRETHREN,

"We beg you to accept our sincere thanks for your kind attention in sending us your propositions for general pacification and discipline.

"We are sensible of the liberality and candour which are manifest in them. It is evident from their tenor, that you have attempted to meet the views of each party. We hope and trust that, by the blessing of God, it may be a means of uniting the whole Body of Methodists throughout the three kingdoms.

"With all deference to the Conference, we submit the following propositions to their further attention:—

"That some provision be made for the brethren who differ from the judgment of trustees or the major part of a Society on the subjects in question, as we suppose such cases are numerous and important: we particularly refer to the Leeds Circuit.

"That the case of those chapels where there are no leaders be more fully explained.

and those who thought with him agreed to accept the Plan of Pacification from the following considerations :—"1. We have gained a great deal more than we expected. 2. Our people are not prepared for more at present. 3. In two or three years we shall have all that we wish." *

All parties were fully satisfied with the new measures as far as they went, although some looked to further changes, for which they confessed the people were not prepared. What then was the nature of the changes thus introduced? As far as they respected discipline, they made no alteration in the ruling element of connexional government, as established by Wesley's Deed Poll,—namely, the absolute power of the Conference to appoint preachers to all the chapels. The supremacy of the Conference was most distinctly and emphatically recognised and enforced. And the extended privileges and protection afforded to the laity principally consisted in means for guarding the Connexion against any erroneous or improper appointment which the Conference might make, by allowing trustees, leaders, and stewards to judge of the morality, orthodoxy, and ministerial ability of any preacher sent to their respective Circuits.

Renewal of agitation.

From the auspicious manner in which the Conference of 1795 closed, it might have been hoped that the Connexion would be soon restored to peace and unity; and so, in all probability, it would, but for two active and influential

"Also those where the sacrament is administered every Sunday in the parochial church.

"Although we think it our duty thus candidly to state the views which have occurred to us in carefully perusing the propositions, yet we think it necessary to say we shall cheerfully acquiesce in the final determination of the Conference.

"Signed on behalf of the Meeting, MICHAEL LONGRIDGE."

"*Manchester, August 3rd*, 1795."

* Kilham's Life, p. 225.

causes of disquiet. The first was the troubled state of Europe, and especially the political excitement which prevailed in England. The French Revolution was invested with its greatest glory by the success which had crowned the French arms in Italy and Germany; while at home the prevalence of general distress, and the rapid spread of republican opinions, brought the nation to the verge of rebellion, and disposed the people to receive with eagerness any allegation of tyranny and oppression, and to respond heartily to any call to liberty, however unreasonable or vain the ground of the appeal. The other cause of discontent in the Methodist Societies was the conduct of Alexander Kilham and his associates. Receiving the Plan of Pacification only as an instalment of what he had demanded, soon after the Conference Kilham began the course of action which has been detailed in the preceding chapter, and which led to his expulsion in 1796. Released from all restraint, he commenced an active and vigorous course of agitation in all parts of the Connexion. Circular letters and pamphlets were diligently disseminated, meetings held, and speeches delivered through the country, for the avowed purpose of persuading the people that the preachers had conspired to deprive them of their just liberty, and that, as intelligent Christian men, they were bound to resist the aggression, to combine for the purpose of destroying the supremacy of the Conference, and to bring the preachers to what was openly alleged to be their scriptural and just position,—namely, the servants of the people. From the Conference of 1796 to that of 1797, great and continued excitement was kept up in the principal Societies throughout the country.

The Conference of 1797 was looked forward to by all parties with deep interest and anxiety; and there was one man among the preachers who devoted himself with great

Mr. Pawson's revision of the Large Minutes. Adopted by the Conference.

zeal to prepare himself, and the Conference, for the impending crisis. Perceiving that the circumstances of the Connexion required a clear and complete definition of the principal rules and regulations of the Body, John Pawson made a careful revision of the "Large Minutes." These were the most important regulations, collected by Wesley from the "Minutes" of various years, and published as a compendium of Methodist law, for the information and guidance of preachers and people. But the troubled state of the Connexion having led Pawson to look carefully into the subject, he found that the changes introduced into the Societies by lapse of time and alteration of circumstances, had rendered many of these regulations obsolete, and called for a modification of others. He accordingly revised these Minutes throughout, making such emendations and omissions as he thought necessary.

On the assembling of Conference, Mr. Pawson submitted his emendations; and the subject was thought of so much importance, that two whole days were devoted to its careful consideration. The Minutes, as revised by Mr. Pawson, were first read over, and considered, clause by clause. A few alterations having been made, they were declared to be the standard of Methodist law, and were so recognised by the following declaration:—

"Whereas, we, the undersigned, have on this and the preceding day carefully revised the rules drawn up and left us by our late venerable father in the Gospel, the Rev. Mr. Wesley, which were published by him in our Large Minutes, to which we consented when we were admitted, and by which we were regulated during his life: And whereas we have collected together those rules, which we believe to be essential to the existence of Methodism, as well as others to which we have no objection: We do now

VOLUNTARILY and in GOOD FAITH sign our names, as approving of, and engaging to comply with, the aforesaid collection of rules, or code of laws, God being our Helper."

Every preacher present signed this document, except Mr. William Thom, who left the Connexion, and four others afterward followed his example. They joined Mr. Kilham, and together founded the New Connexion. By this measure the Conference gave to Methodism a clearly defined code of laws, as the basis of its polity, to which the preachers were fully committed, and to which any other rules, afterward agreed on, could be added.

Trustee delegates assemble at Leeds during the sittings of Conference.

On the 31st of July a number of trustees assembled in Leeds, delegated from several trusts throughout the country. Influenced by the prevalent discontent, they came, as in 1795, to urge their complaints on the Conference, with a view to obtain further regulations likely to remove all causes of uneasiness. Sixty-seven delegates attended from as many several trusts.* It was first resolved, "That all general questions relative to the welfare of the Methodist Societies be discussed and decided before those of a particular and local nature." It was then next proposed, but negatived, "That the preachers be requested to publish an annual account of the receipts and disbursements of what is commonly called the Preachers' Fund." A short series of resolutions were then adopted, requesting that the accounts of Kingswood School, the Yearly Collection, and the Book Room, be published, and examined by a mixed Committee of ministers and laymen, urging lay delegation in the Conference, and expressing a desire that a Committee of trustees should

Discussions and resolutions of the delegates.

* See Appendix J.

meet a Committee of preachers, to discuss any matter connected with the Rules of the Connexion.*

The Conference replied, consenting to the publication of the accounts of Kingswood School, and the Yearly Collection, but refusing to concede the question of lay delegation.†

* "*Resolved,*

"1. That the Conference be requested to publish annually a statement of the receipts and disbursements on account of Kingswood School, the Yearly Collection, and the Book Room.

"2. That it is expedient that a Committee of the delegates, in conjunction with a Committee of the preachers, should examine the three accounts above mentioned, in order that a full and explicit account of the present state of each separate fund may be published.

"3. That it is necessary, in order to restore and preserve peace in the Connexion, that two or three delegates from each District should in future be at liberty to attend the Conference every year; and that the said delegates should have votes in making or altering the Rules of the Methodist Societies, and in the appropriation of the money in the hands of the preachers, on account of the three funds above mentioned."

"*Ordered,*

"That the Conference be requested to signify to this meeting how far they agree with this meeting in the above resolutions."

"*Resolved,*

"That this meeting is ready to appoint a Committee to meet a Committee of the preachers, to discuss any matter relative to the Rules of the Methodist Societies, and the best mode of spreading scriptural religion through the land."—"Minutes of the Proceedings of a Meeting of Delegates. Leeds: Thomas Gill. 1797."

† "LEEDS, *August 2nd*, 1797.

DEAR BRETHREN,

"YOUR letter was read in the full Conference, and each proposition contained therein was distinctly considered, and the following answers were agreed upon:—

"1. Although the accounts of the disbursements of the Kingswood School have been regularly kept, and audited by a Committee appointed by the Conference; yet, as these accounts have not been published in detail, we determine in future to give our friends all the satisfaction in our power on this head.

"2. As to the Yearly Collection, we last year published a detail of its

The Delegates, having received this reply, resolved, "That a Committee of this meeting be appointed to meet a Committee of the preachers, in order to consider what farther can be done to promote the peace of the Connexion." The Committee consisted of the chairman, Matthew Mayer, Edmund Whitehead, George Garside, Michael Longridge, John Fletcher, William Hardon, John Turner, Matthew Naylor, and John Barker."

After this Committee had held a consultation with a Committee of preachers appointed by the Conference, the meeting of delegates resumed, and unanimously resolved, "That the Conference be requested to make a rule by which all moneys sent to the Conference, all deficiencies requested to be paid by the Conference, and all information necessary to be communicated from the Quarter-days to the Conference, be stated in a general letter, (the form to be drawn up and printed by the Conference,) and signed by the Circuit stewards, in concurrence with the Quarterly Meeting; and that the accounts of the Quarterly Meeting lie open to the inspection of any member of the Methodist

Further resolutions of delegates, and replies of Conference.

disbursements; but that having been done by different persons, and the mode being entirely new, we were not then so exact as we are determined in future to be.

"3. Respecting the books, we refer you to the pamphlet which accompanies this (pages 5 and 6).

"4. With respect to delegates, the Conference, having maturely considered the subject, are thoroughly persuaded, with many of our Societies whose addresses were read this day, that they cannot admit any but travelling preachers into their body, and preserve the system of Methodism entire, particularly the itinerant plan.

"We are, dear Brethren,

"In behalf of the Conference,

"Your truly affectionate Servants,

"THOMAS COKE, *President*,

SAMUEL BRADBURN, *Secretary*."

Society, that may wish to examine it." And also, "That the Conference be requested to re-consider and revise their rules relative to local preachers, and to the calling of meetings."

To these communications the Conference sent answers, conceding in substance the requests of the Trustees.*

The delegates then proceeded to consider the Bristol case. Having read a letter from the trustees of Broadmead and Guinea Street chapels, and a printed statement of their case, they came to the following resolution:—"That this meeting having duly considered the situation of the Bristol brethren with respect to Mr. Bradford's conduct in opening the new chapel in church hours, and as the Plan of Pacification mutually agreed to by the meeting of trustees, &c., with the preachers of the Manchester Conference, appears to have been violated by Mr. Bradford's conduct; it meets with the decided disapprobation of this meeting, and the Conference are requested to take the Bristol case into consideration, and to transmit to this meeting their decision on it as soon as possible." It was also resolved, "That the conduct of

* "LEEDS, *August 4th*, 1797.

"THE District Meetings shall make no divisions of Circuits, or take in any bill of deficiencies, or settle any other temporal affairs, which have not first met with the approbation of the Quarterly Meeting or Quarterly Meetings respectively, and been signed by the respective Circuit stewards.

"(Signed) THOMAS COKE, *President*,
SAMUEL BRADBURN, *Secretary*."

"IN explaining the above minute, it was fully and explicitly understood that, if there be any accusation against a preacher, or any difficult affair to settle, not only Circuit or town stewards, but any leader, or even member, shall be admitted as evidence into the District Meeting, provided the matter has been first heard at a Quarterly Meeting.

"(Signed) T. COKE,
S. BRADBURN."

those preachers who, in conjunction with Mr. Bradford, have violated the rules of Pacification, also meets with our decided disapprobation."

The fault here alleged against Mr. Bradford, namely, that of conducting service in church hours in the new chapel at Bristol, had previously excited attention. The trustees insisted that it was a violation of the Plan of Pacification, published their view of the case, and afterward appealed to the District Meeting. The preachers accordingly assembled, and unanimously declared that, in their judgment, "Mr. Bradford and his colleagues had only a choice of evils before them;" and that "greater evils would have ensued from not preaching on the forenoon on Sundays than any that could follow from doing it." The District Committee, therefore, recommended that the case should stand over for the Conference itself to determine. The trustees accordingly felt anxious to induce the delegates to adopt their view of the case. On a subsequent day they received "the opinion of the Conference, that the Plan of Pacification, in respect to the affairs at Bristol, has been broke; but they are determined this shall not be a precedent, but they will take proper measures that the Plan shall be sacredly observed in future."

On reading this statement, the delegates resolved, "That this meeting expect the Conference to forbid any preacher to preach in the new chapel, Horsefair, Bristol, during the time of church hours, on condition that the trustees and people of the Old Room return to the Connexion, and assist their brethren, according to the Plan of Pacification;" and immediately sent a copy of their resolution to the Conference.

At this stage of their proceedings the delegates received a letter from Alexander Kilham, stating that he had been

appointed a delegate by a majority of the trustees of Hunslet chapel, and inquiring whether he could be admitted in that character. He received in reply the following resolution:—"That Mr. Alexander Kilham, being a preacher under the censure of the Conference of Methodist preachers, cannot with propriety be admitted into this meeting."

On the morning of Saturday, August 5th, the delegates resolved, "That the Committee of this meeting do consider with the preachers' Committee on the following subjects:—

"1. The answer of the Conference with respect to the Bristol case.

"2. How far the preachers will agree, that when the Conference shall make any new rule for the Societies at large, provided that the travelling preachers find at the first Quarterly Meeting, that the major part of that meeting, in conjunction with the preachers, are of opinion that enforcing of such rule in that Circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that Circuit, it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of a Quarterly Meeting until after a second Conference.

"3. How far the Conference will agree to submit any new rule that they wish to make for the Connexion to the sanction of any meeting of trustees, stewards, &c., sent to places where the Conference shall be held in future."

On Monday morning, they received the following communication from the Conference:—"In compliance with a request made by a Committee of persons from various parts; namely, 'that the Conference be requested to reconsider and revise those rules which relate to the calling of meetings and appointing local preachers, made last year;' we say, no local preacher shall be permitted to preach in any other Circuit without producing a recom-

mendation from the superintendent of the Circuit in which he lives, nor suffer any invitation to be admitted as a plea, but from men in office who act in conjunction with the superintendent of that Circuit.

"The design of this rule is to prevent any, under the character of a local preacher, from burdening the people, either by collecting money, or by living upon them, and to prevent improper persons, who bear no part of the expense, from inviting local preachers thus to visit them: but it was never intended to reflect the least disrespect on any of our worthy brethren, the local preachers, whom, considered as a body, we greatly respect. And it should not be lost sight of, that several of the most respectable local preachers in the kingdom, who were in the Committee that met the Committee of the preachers appointed by the Conference, declared their high approbation of the rule, and desired that it might be strengthened as much as possible, as none could justly complain of it.

"No local preachers shall keep Love-feasts without the consent of the superintendent, nor in anywise interfere in his business. Let every one keep in his own place, and attend to the duties of his own station.

"And as the Committee above-mentioned have requested that the Minutes of the last Conference concerning the calling of meetings to consider of the affairs of the Society or Connexion be explained, and as we are exceedingly desirous of preserving the peace and union of the whole Body, we have agreed upon the following explanation:—

"1. As the Leaders' Meeting is the proper meeting for the Society, and the Quarterly Meeting for the Circuit, we think that other formal meetings, in general, would be contrary to the Methodist economy, and very prejudicial in their consequences.

"But, 2. In order to be as tender as possible, consistently with what we believe to be essential to the welfare of our Societies, we allow that other meetings may be held, which first receive the approbation of the superintendent, and the Leaders' Meeting, or Quarterly Meeting, provided that the superintendent, if he please, may be present at every such meeting."

This explanation was considered satisfactory by the delegates, as it did "not include any denial of the right of trustees to meet in the execution of the business of their trusts."

A plan for the regulation of the executive government of the Methodist Societies was recommended to the consideration of the Conference by the Committee of the trustees; and the following letter from the Conference was then read, as a reply to their recommendation:—

"The Conference spent most of the forenoon in considering the subject mentioned in your letter relative to our executive government, and have passed the following rules, namely,—

"1. That in cases which (according to the judgment of the Chairman) cannot be settled by the ordinary District Committee, he shall have authority to summon three of the nearest superintendents, who shall be incorporated with the District Committee, and have an equal right to vote and settle everything until the Conference.

"But it is to be understood that everything is to be regularly passed through the Leaders' Meetings, to Quarterly Meetings, and finally to the District Meeting, which, as regulated above, will generally be competent to the most difficult cases.

"2. That if at any time the Conference see it necessary to make any new rule for the Societies at large, and such

rule should be objected to in the first Quarterly Meeting in any given Circuit, and if the major part of that Meeting, in conjunction with the preachers, be of opinion that the enforcing of such rule in that Circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that Circuit, it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of such Quarterly Meeting, till after the second Conference. But if the rule be confirmed by the second Conference, it shall be binding on the whole Connexion. Nevertheless, the Quarterly Meetings rejecting a new rule shall not, by publications, public meetings, or otherwise, make that rule a cause of contention, but shall strive by every means to preserve the peace of the Connexion.

"The Conference have appointed a Committee to meet this evening, to consider what remains of the case of Bristol, and to make their report to-morrow morning, when you shall have our determination."

On Tuesday morning August 8th, a communication was received by the delegates from the Conference, respecting the Bristol case; when they passed the following resolution, and sent a copy to the Conference:—"That the paper sent into Conference from this meeting yesterday, relative to the Bristol business, contains the ultimatum of this meeting; and that the Conference be requested to send to this meeting their final determination on the business." They then proceeded to pass resolutions for preventing improper persons obtaining admission into any future meeting of delegates, and for appointing a standing Committee of trustees, the majority of whom should have power to call together a general meeting, whenever in their judgment the circumstances of the Connexion rendered such a step necessary.

The next day the delegates received the following communication from the Conference:—

"The Conference, in union with the Committee of the trustees in Leeds, advise the contending parties in Bristol to settle their differences in the following manner:—

"1. That our brethren who attend Divine service in the Old Room and Guinea Street chapel unite with their brethren of the new chapel, and bring all their subscriptions and collections into one and the same channel with our brethren of the new chapel, according to the agreement made at Manchester, and take seats and attend in general at the new chapel.

"2. That our brethren of the new chapel, if the others comply with the above conditions, give up the service in church hours in that chapel." *

Amicable termination of these disputes.

Thus terminated the grave and harassing business of this most important Conference. The trustees became united with the preachers, in spirit and aim. The division of the Body, which enemies to its prosperity, both within and without, ardently desired, was entirely averted. Preachers and people, released from vexatious and unprofitable wrangling, were able to pursue their true and proper calling of spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land.

* This document was "signed on behalf of the Conference,

"T. COKE, *President*,
S. BRADBURN, *Secretary*.

"Signed on behalf of the Trustees,

"THOMAS CROWTHER,
JOHN MAWSON,
JOHN TURNER,
THOMAS WOODCROFT,
WILLIAM HARDEN,
ABRAHAM DICKINSON,
JOHN WHITAKER,
MATTHEW MAYER,
JOHN FLETCHER,
GEORGE GARSIDE,
JOHN BUTLER."

As soon as the delegates received the last-mentioned document, they felt their work was ended, and their object attained. They accordingly passed the following resolutions:—

"1. That our minutes be printed and sent to the delegates of those Circuits who subscribed toward the expense of printing them.

"2. That the thanks of this meeting be unanimously given to the president and the members of the Conference, for the kind attention to the business of the delegation of the trustees that has been laid before them; and that it is their determination to support the Methodist cause on the plan agreed on at this Conference."

Having sent these resolutions to the Conference, and passed votes of thanks to their own president and secretary, the delegates closed their minutes with inserting the final letter sent them by the Conference.*

* "DEAR BRETHREN,

"WE have received your letter of thanks, which gave us very great pleasure; and we do sincerely return you our thanks for your candid and Christian-like conduct throughout the whole of your proceedings in the character of representatives of the trustees, &c.

"Your determination to support the Methodist cause, on the plan agreed to by Conference, still adds to our satisfaction. We join our hands and hearts with yours, and trust we shall all of us continue faithful till death in the good old cause, which many of you and us have so long been engaged in, and in which we are determined to spend our strength and lives.

"To God's holy keeping we recommend you. Assure all our brethren whom you have represented in the present business, that we are faithfully attached to them by every tie of love and duty. May the God of peace and love be with you and yours for ever!

"We are your truly affectionate Brethren,

"THOMAS COKE, *President*,

SAMUEL BRADBURN, *Secretary*.

"Signed on behalf and by order of the Conference.

"LEEDS, *August 9th*, 1797."

As it is scarcely possible to over-estimate the importance of the proceedings of this Conference, and their influence on the future peace and stability of Methodism, we have given a full account of the origin of the several measures, and the form and connexion in which they were adopted. But as it may be necessary for the reader to have these regulations as a whole, and in their proper position as part of the Methodist economy, they are appended to this volume * precisely as they are found in the octavo Minutes.

Methodism, with these emendations, stands before us matured and consolidated. Our attention may therefore be suitably directed to a calm and impartial investigation into its true character and status, when regarded as a scriptural Church. This will form the subject of the following chapter.

* See Appendix K.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SCRIPTURAL CHARACTER OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH.

Before inquiring into the claims of the Methodist Connexion, as settled by the regulations of the Conference of 1797, to be regarded as a scriptural Church, it will be necessary, in the first place, to offer a few observations on the constitution and character of the Church of Christ generally.

The constitution of the Christian Church.

In the original Scriptures of the New Testament, the term rendered "Church" is *ἐκκλησία*, a word which signifies "an assembly:" it is derived from *ἐκκαλέω*, "*to call out.*" The origin of our Saxon word "Church" is doubtful; but it is to be taken as representing the sense of the Greek term. In its largest, and probably most accurate, meaning, it sets before us the church universal; the collective body of all those over the whole earth who profess to believe in Christ, and acknowledge Him as the Saviour of mankind. (Col. i. 18.) The early fathers frequently used the word in this sense; and this is what we mean when we speak of "the visible church."

A second application of the term "Church" is to a religious society, meeting together for worship. The word was frequently used in this sense by the early fathers, and the New-Testament writers. (Acts xiv. 23; Rom. xvi. 5.) And this is the precise meaning in which it is employed in the nineteenth Article of the Church of England; which says, "The visible church of Christ is a congrega-

tion of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

The term was also used in ancient times to designate the several churches or congregations of Christians contained within a certain geographical area, as Cyprian speaks of "the church of God in Africa and Numidia." And it is frequently employed now, in an analogous sense, to signify any denomination of Christians distinguished by particular doctrines, ceremonies, &c., as the Romish Church, the Greek Church, the English Church, &c.

The Popish dogma of one visible Church, under a visible head, is clearly contrary to Scripture, which distinctly speaks of numerous churches, as "the churches of Judea," "of Achaia," "the seven churches of Asia," &c. So far, indeed, were the apostles from recognising one human governing head for this universal Church, that they did the very opposite, by making provision and arrangements for the direction and preservation of the several churches raised up by their labours. Nor does the opposite theory of the perfect independence of every separate religious *congregation* find more countenance from the inspired writers of the New Testament. Whatever might have been the case with small, isolated, and unimportant Christian communities, it is certain that most of the large, influential, and flourishing churches had many presbyters, acting in concert over several congregations. So, when churches were formed in the suburbs of cities, or in the regions round about, country bishops, or visiting presbyters, were appointed, who acted under the direction of the presbytery of the city.

We are by no means anxious to limit the meaning of the term "Church," or to define with exact precision the

Ecclesiastical position claimed for the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion.

sense in which it is to be understood. If it is used to set forth the entire body of those who profess faith in Christ as the Saviour of mankind, then it is maintained, that the Wesleyan Methodist community forms a scriptural and integral part of this universal church. Or, when the term is applied to particular denominations of Christians, as the English Church, the Church of Scotland, &c., we insist on the strict propriety of calling the Wesleyan Connexion the Methodist Church: while to those who continue to call every separate Christian congregation a church, we say that the Methodist Connexion is a union or combination of churches.

Let it not, however, be supposed that we desire to bring the term "Church" into more frequent and general use in association with Methodism, to the exclusion or extinction of the old and venerated name "Societies." We greatly prefer the latter, and regret the frequent use of the term "Church" in recent times. It is not the name, but the thing, that we insist upon. We have no wish for the abolition of our old nomenclature, nor for the introduction of novel high-sounding terms; but we do claim for the Methodist Societies a scriptural and ecclesiastical *status* equal to that of any other Church or denomination.

In maintaining this claim, we are determined to keep at the greatest distance from a controversial spirit; but it is a fact patent to the world, and may as well be explicitly recognised, that this claim is rejected and opposed by two classes of persons, who assail the pretensions of Wesleyan Methodism to a scriptural character by directly opposite principles and arguments.

The first of these parties comprises the Papists and High Churchmen, with many others in the National Establishment, who deny that the Wesleyan preachers have

any scriptural ministerial appointment or position. They repudiate the validity and efficacy of the sacraments as administered by them, and consider the whole community in a state of schism. The other class is found in the ranks of extreme Dissent. They maintain that the Methodist Conferences of 1795 and 1797, instead of conferring any boon, or giving any additional privileges to their Societies, actually—from a lust of power and thirst for aggrandizement—robbed them of rights and powers previously possessed, thereby violating the first principles which ought to regulate the internal economy of a Christian church, and perpetuating a vicious and corrupt ecclesiastical system. The following vindication of the Wesleyan Methodist economy will, it is hoped, convince candid Christians that these conflicting allegations are equally and entirely without foundation.

Scriptural validity of the appointment of Wesleyan ministers.

On entering upon this task, it will be necessary to show on scriptural evidence, that Wesleyan Methodist preachers are truly ministers of Christ. This is an essential element of the case. If these men are not recognised by the Divine Head as His ministers, the entire claim of the Connexion to a scriptural *status* falls to the ground.

But why should this be doubted? These men are unexceptionable in morals. They possess fair intellectual ability and ministerial gifts. They are heard every Sabbath by countless thousands, who receive and profit by their ministrations; and numerous Societies in every part of the country regard them as their fathers in the Gospel. Why, then, should it be assumed that these persons are not truly and indeed ministers of Christ? The answer given, by one of these parties, is, that there are, by unalterable divine appointment, three distinct orders of ministers in the Church of Christ, namely, Bishops, Priests,

and Deacons; that Bishops only have authority to ordain; and that consequently, where there is no Bishop, there can be no valid ordination, no true ministers, or church, or sacraments. To sustain and enforce this dogma, it is asserted, that there has been in the Church a regular and unbroken series of valid episcopal ordinations, commencing with the apostles, and reaching down to the present times; that all those, and none but those, ordained by a bishop in this unbroken line of succession, are true ministers of Christ; and that Methodist preachers, not having been so ordained, are not ministers. These statements are so startling, they involve such monstrous consequences, and are so opposed to Scripture, that it would be unworthy any reasonable man's attempt to confute them, had they not been put forward with such persevering constancy, and asserted as matters of fact with such confidence and authority, that they are extensively believed.

Apostolical succession.

If these statements be true, the purity, holiness, and truth, absolutely essential to the Christian character, must either be given up, or, at least, regarded as not necessary to the character of a Christian minister. According to this scheme, it is not personal qualification, or any divine vocation, but the act of ordination, which constitutes the minister. Be the man ever so wise, pious, or useful, without this precise ordination he is no minister of Christ: while, provided he has this ordination, he is a Christian minister endowed with the gift of conferring grace, although he may be at the same time a most abandoned and profligate sinner. Upon the principles now under consideration, this boasted line of succession cannot be drawn without including an infidel, a Simonist, a drunkard, an adulterer, among those who are set forth as the medium through which all spiritual

influence and covenanted grace were handed down to the present and future ages of the world.

But the allegations respecting this succession are contrary to historical truth. It is indeed boldly asserted, "As to the fact of the apostolical succession, &c., this is too notorious to require proof. Every link of the chain is known, from St. Peter to our present metropolitans."* This may be as convenient as it is bold; but a brief citation of the best authorities will show that it is a reckless statement, without any foundation in history.

Eusebius, the principal authority for the ecclesiastical history of the first three centuries, says, "We are totally unable to find even the bare vestiges of those who may have travelled the way before us: unless, perhaps, what is only presented in the slight intimations which some in different ways have transmitted in certain partial narratives of the times in which they lived; who raising their voices before us, like torches at a distance, and as looking down from some commanding height, call out and exhort us where we should walk." Surely it may be reasonably doubted, whether these "slight intimations," culled from partial narratives of the times, these "torches at a distance," are sufficiently luminous to guide us, on a subject of so much importance as the validity of churches, and the efficacy of ordinations and sacraments.

The doctrines of High Churchmen on this subject opposed to history.

Those who trace their succession in this manner, deduce their spiritual descent from "Peter, as bishop of Rome, who is supposed, on the authority of Eusebius, to have held this see. But this is far from being a settled point. Dr. Cave doubted it; Archbishop Cranmer says, 'that it is not certain that Peter ever was at Rome.' Flacius Illyricus and Zanchius are of the same mind. But

* "Oxford Tracts for the Times," No. VII., p. 2.

if this doubtful point be granted, who succeeded Peter? No man on earth can tell. Tertullian, Rufinus, and Epiphanius say, Clement succeeded Peter. Jerome declares that most of the Latin authors supposed Clement to be the successor of Peter. But Irenæus, Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine contradict these authorities, and say Linus succeeded Peter; Chrysostom seems to go the same way. Bishop Pearson has proved that Linus died before Peter; and therefore, on the supposition that Peter was bishop of Rome, Linus could not succeed him. Cabassute, the learned Popish historian of the councils, says, 'It is a *very doubtful question* concerning Linus, Cletus, and Clement, as to which succeeded Peter.' Dr. Comber, a very learned divine of the Church of England, says, 'Upon the whole matter, there is no *certainty* who was bishop of Rome *next to the apostles;* and therefore the *Romanists* (N.B. the Romanists!) build upon an ill bottom, when they lay so great weight upon personal succession.'"

But who was the third bishop of Rome? for of the second there is no certainty. Here the confusion is greater still. The Roman catalogues, the catalogues of High Churchmen, must have somebody; so they put Cletus in. Hear Dr. Comber again: "The like blunder there is about the next pope (bishop of Rome): the fabulous Pontifical makes Cletus succeed Linus, and gives several Lives of Cletus and Anacletus, making them of different nations, and to have been popes at different times, putting Clement between them."

"The fourth bishop of Rome is equally doubtful. Cabassute says, 'The whole question is very doubtful.' Prideaux, a learned Churchman, says, 'No certainty is to be had.' Howel, a thorough Churchman, is of the same mind. Yet, this is the chain, every link of which is so

distinctly ascertainable! Well might Bishop Stillingfleet declare that this succession is as muddy as the Tiber itself. Nor is this learned prelate the only one of his order who opposed this doctrine. Bishop Hoadley says, 'As far as we can judge of this, God's providence never yet, in fact, kept up a regular uninterrupted succession of rightful bishops.' Again: 'It hath not pleased God, in His providence, to keep up any proof, of the least probability or moral possibility, of a regular uninterrupted succession; but there is a great appearance, and, humanly speaking, a certainty to the contrary, that the succession hath often been interrupted.' Archbishop Whately maintains that there 'is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up, with approach to certainty, his spiritual pedigree.' The eminent Chillingworth says, 'I am fully persuaded there hath been no such succession:' while Wesley declares, 'The uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove.'" *

It will be necessary here to glance at the consequences which must result from the truth of those opinions. Those who hold them invite our attention to this by stating what they believe to be the consequence of rejecting their doctrine. "Christ promised to be with His apostles and their successors, 'even unto the end of the world,'" say they: "therefore, the fact of such succession must be affirmed, or we 'must admit that the church which Christ founded is no longer to be found upon earth, and that the promise of His protection has already failed.'" But a learned prelate observes that the fallacy of this allegation "consists in confounding together the unbroken apostolical succession of a Christian ministry, and the same succession in an unbroken line of this or that individual minister."

* "Perilous Times," p. 273. See also vol. i. of this History, p. 520.

The existence of the former is a well-established fact, and it is all that the Scriptures warrant us to expect.

But what must be the consequences to the Christian church of the truth of these dogmas? The first is sufficiently startling and undeniable. If this personal unbroken succession be maintained, then all the Christianity in the world has flowed through St. Peter. All the other apostles—even the great apostle to the Gentiles, with his unparalleled labours and sufferings—have failed to perpetuate any fruit. In no instance is there any church or people, according to this doctrine, resulting from the labours of any other apostle than Peter, to whom every real Christian and Christian minister in the world must look up, as to his spiritual father. We know not how others may regard this; to us it is incredible.

But a still more frightful consequence must result from this hypothesis, if it be true. Not only does it deny to Methodist preachers the position of Christian ministers, and proclaim them to be unhallowed pretenders to a sacred office to which they are not validly appointed; but all the ministers of the Established Church of Scotland, all other Nonconformist ministers in England, multitudes in America and on the Continent of Europe, (amounting altogether, it has been estimated, to more than two-thirds of the ministers in Christendom,) are unauthorized teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing; and their flocks no longer to be regarded as churches of Christ. No hallowed influence, according to this teaching, attends their ordinances. A scheme which leads to such consequences, is as arrogant and uncharitable as it is groundless.

And contrary to Scripture.

But our grand objection to this great perversion is yet to be stated. We hold the Holy Scriptures to be the rule, and the only sufficient rule, of Christian faith and practice.

Here, and here only, we look for just criteria to test the validity of any man's claim to the office of a Christian minister. Here we find ample directions bearing on every part of the case, so that churches and ministers, who honestly, and with singleness of mind, desire to act in accord with the will of the great Head of the church may be saved from all error and guided aright.

The great objection to the bold and exclusive claim to a personal succession from the apostles, therefore, is, that it has no warrant, sanction, or support from this infallible rule which Christ has given to His church; but is decidedly opposed to it. True, we read in the New Testament of deacons, presbyters, (πρεσβύτεροι,) and bishops (ἐπίσκοποι). But it is equally certain that the two latter terms were applied to the same class of ministers. As, for instance, Acts xx. 17–28, where Paul, addressing the presbyters of Ephesus, says, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you" (the presbyters) ἐπισκόπους, "bishops" or "overseers." Many other passages might be quoted in proof of this point, and many from the early fathers to the same effect. Thus Jerome distinctly affirms, "A presbyter is the same as a bishop." The doctrine of the three orders, as separate and distinct, is therefore sanctioned neither by Scripture nor by Christian antiquity. Much less is the personal succession, in the manner supposed by Popish and modern Anglican Church writers, promised, affirmed, or intimated in any manner whatever.

Having referred to Holy Scripture as the only sure and certain rule for judging the validity of a minister's claim to the sacred office, we are prepared to apply this test fairly and fully to the case of the Methodist preachers, as they stood before the world from and after the Conference

of 1797. It is the direct injunction of the holy record, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." And the reason assigned for this injunction, namely, "Because many false prophets are gone out into the world," clearly shows that it was intended specially to apply to such an examination of the claims put forth by any man or body of men, as would satisfactorily ascertain whether they are really ministers of Christ, or mere pretenders to that sacred office.

Scriptural test of ministerial character.

It is by no means an unimportant circumstance that the opposition which the apostles had to encounter led them to defend themselves in their twofold character, as apostles and as ministers. And in each case the proof is drawn from *character* and *usefulness*. When the great apostle of the Gentiles moots the important question, "Am I not an apostle?" what is the answer? "Have I not seen the Lord?" But this of itself would afford no proof of the fact to which he adverted; hundreds of persons were still alive who had seen the Lord, but who, nevertheless, were not apostles. It was necessary that he should have seen the Lord, in order that he might from Him receive the apostolic commission, and be a witness of His resurrection; but the proof of his sustaining this office was not in his having received the appointment, but in the success of his mission in the salvation of men. Hence he adds, "Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet *doubtless* I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." (1 Cor. ix. 1, 2.) He had not only seen the Lord, and been sent forth by Him; he had delivered His message with fidelity and effect; and he therefore with confidence adduces those who had been saved by his word, as the "seal of his apostleship." This shows the kind of evidence by which any claim to the

character of a Christian minister is to be sustained. For if Paul did not refer for proof of his apostleship to *his* extraordinary call and Divine appointment, but to the fruits of his ministry, few others will find a good reason for taking a different course.

It is accordingly found that all the scriptural directions on the subject are in harmony with this language of the apostle. The first thing insisted on is that the pure evangelical truth be preached. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. i. 8.) "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." (2 John 9, 10.) "Approving ourselves as the ministers of God.....by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left;.....as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich." (2 Cor. vi. 4–10.) In none of these important portions of holy writ, bearing immediately as they do on the vocation and work of the Christian ministry, is there any allusion to a particular appointment, or ordination. The things which they pre-eminently set forth as essentials, are purity of doctrine, purity of life, and spiritual success. But while insisting on the scriptural necessity of pious character, and purity of doctrine, and some degree of fruit, in all those who act as ministers of Christ, Methodists by no means overlook the necessity of a divine call, and of a call from the church, to this sacred

office. None recognise more fully than they, that "no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God."

Manner of selecting and appointing Wesleyan ministers.

We will now briefly describe the manner in which persons are appointed to the office of the ministry in the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

They are first members of Society, and persons who have given evidence of decided piety, and talents for public usefulness by Christian teaching. And, it may be observed, this evidence is not presented to strangers by any profession or examination; it is given to immediate neighbours and friends, to those among whom the man lives, who witness his every-day conduct, and hear him every week speak of the work of grace in his heart.

The man whose piety and talents produce such impressions on the elders and experienced members of the Society to which he belongs, occasionally gives a word of exhortation; and when he feels it his duty to engage in a more important and public way of usefulness, he is usually placed on trial as a local preacher. In this position he continues from six to twelve months, preaching in the village chapels of his Circuit, according to Plans prepared by his superintendent. At the expiration of the appointed probation, the candidate is examined respecting his conversion and call to preach, his views of Christian doctrine, and his approval and observance of Wesleyan Methodist discipline. This examination takes place in the presence of the local preachers, who have every opportunity of knowing his manner of life and moral conduct, and of learning, from experienced members of Society in different parts of the Circuit, the character and effects of his preaching. If, after hearing this examination, the ministers and local preachers are

not satisfied of his fitness for the office of local preacher, he is either rejected or kept longer on trial, as the case may require; but if they are satisfied, he is received as a local preacher. In common with all his brethren, his name is called over at every quarterly Local Preachers' Meeting, in connexion with the inquiry, "Is there any objection to his moral character, doctrine, abilities, attention to his appointments, and observance of our discipline?"

When any young man has passed this ordeal, and by his ability, zeal, piety, and usefulness, leads the ministers and people to believe that he is called of God to be wholly separated to the work and office of the ministry, his own views and feelings being in accord with this impression, he becomes a candidate for that sacred office. It is very evident, therefore, that the Wesleyan economy is peculiarly adapted to carry out one very important apostolic direction respecting the selection and appointment of ministers. Paul, writing to Timothy, says, "And let these also first be proved." (1 Tim. iii. 10.) We do not stay to inquire how this can be done, where a person is never allowed to preach until ordained a minister; but it is manifest that, in the case before us, there is precisely that testing of character and ability which the great apostle required.

Still, two parties must concur in judgment, before the person can take one step toward the ministry. The superintendent minister alone can recommend a person to the Quarterly Meeting as a candidate; but none can be accepted by the District Meeting, unless the March Quarterly Meeting of the Circuit to which he belongs formally approve such recommendation. Before any man can be placed in the way of access to the Wesleyan ministry, the superintendent on the one hand,

and the largest and highest church meeting on the other, must agree that he is a suitable person for that sacred office. Surely this is a most important means for preventing improper persons intruding into the ministry. The senior pastor must approve his piety and ability, and the best informed of the people be satisfied that he is adapted to proclaim God's truth, and to feed them with "the sincere milk of the word."

Being thus recommended and approved, he attends the ensuing District Meeting for another examination, of which the following is the basis:—"Do they know God as a pardoning God? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation? Have they gifts as well as grace for the work? Have they a clear sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them an acceptable way of speaking? Do they speak justly, readily, and clearly? Have they had any fruit of their labour? Have any been truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching?"

Wesley, when he left this series of interrogatories for the examination of candidates, added, "As long as the above marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost." Afterward, a more enlarged and comprehensive series of questions was prepared, which is substantially the doctrinal and disciplinary examination still in use.*

When a candidate had passed these examinations acceptably, in the period of Methodist history now under consideration, he was placed on the List of Reserve,

* See Appendix L.

and appointed to a Circuit when a vacancy occurred. He had then to labour four years on trial; and during that period, at every annual District Meeting, he was examined as to his course of theological reading during the past year; and he was required to deliver to the chairman a list of the books read since the last District Meeting. At the end of the fourth year, he was again subjected to careful examination at the District Meeting. If this was satisfactory, the chairman reported to the Conference, and the preacher was received into "full Connexion," and recognised as a minister of Christ.

Further arrangements have since been made; but this was the usage which followed the regulations of 1797, with some additions introduced on the recommendation of Joseph Entwisle, in 1802.

This sufficiently proves the scriptural character of the Wesleyan ministry.

The calm and serious attention of the Christian reader is earnestly called to this account of the manner in which ministers are appointed to the sacred office in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. And where is there, among all the churches of Christendom, a more scriptural or consistent practice in operation? No Popish or semi-Popish objections have the weight of a feather with us. "To the law and to the testimony" we readily and unreservedly bow; and if this authority is allowed to be supreme, we boldly maintain that, if there be any Christian ministers in the world, the Wesleyan Methodist preachers are truly such.

But it is further objected to the church *status* of Methodism, that the sacraments administered in this community have no sacramental efficacy. The principal argument put forth to enforce this allegation is, that the Methodist preachers cannot consecrate the elements. But when we ask, Why? the answer is, "Because they are not episcopally ordained." As, therefore, we have proved them

to be scriptural ministers of Christ, the objection falls to the ground. As to consecration, the New Testament knows of none, except the separation of the elements to their intended use with prayer and exhortation. This subject, therefore, fully depends on the preceding, and need not be further discussed. We maintain that the ministers of the Wesleyan Connexion are, in every sense, scriptural ministers, competent to perform every ministerial act, including the administration of the sacraments. We are assured this conclusion cannot be successfully impugned by scriptural authority.

Second class of objections to Methodism, on account of its organization and ministerial rule.

Having defended the ministers and institutions of Methodism from the arrogant pretensions of High Churchmen, we have now to repel the violent assaults of Low Dissenters. These occupy different ground, and urge objections of a totally opposite character. One with Wesleyans in doctrine, and not very different from them in their mode of worship and general organization, they place themselves in antagonism to it, alleging that its government is despotic, and deprives its members of their just scriptural rights.

Before entering on a brief discussion of these topics, we observe, that no claim is put forth by Wesleyan Methodists for the perfection or divine appointment of their polity. Only in self-defence do they endeavour to show that the system of their choice is reasonable, and in accordance with the intimations of Scripture. We desire to call attention to two principles which are assumed as self-evident and scriptural by all the aggressors on Methodistic government to whom we now refer. These are, that the people form the seat and centre of power in the Christian church, and that this power is best exercised in the way of representation. Are these principles sound? Is it, for instance, a fact sufficiently established by "Scripture

Unsound assumptions made by these opponents of Wesleyanism.

evidence," that all the members of Christ's body are equal; and that its various officers should act by the general approbation and appointment of the people?

That the church should be fully united as one body, is admitted; but where is it written, that the appointment to office in the church is of scriptural right vested in the people? This is called "purity of principle;" every thing contrary to it is branded as tyranny! But where is the Scripture proof? The ablest writers in support of these views, in default of any direct Scripture evidence, seek support from "analogy between secular and ecclesiastical government." But the church is emphatically "the kingdom of God," and, as such, "is not of this world." Analogy, therefore, does not meet the case, and direct proof of any kind from the sacred record has not been, and cannot be, adduced. We therefore join issue on this fundamental principle, and deny that in the Christian church all power and appointment to office are, of right, inherent in the people. For this reason, also, we reject every plea for a sort of political representation, as a church right, and a necessary element in the government of the church. If the people are not in possession of power, they cannot impart it to a representative: these principles must stand or fall together.

Practical inapplicability of democracy to church polity.

It will not, of course, be expected that we should attempt to prove a negative, by showing, that these principles have no support from New Testament teaching; but we may point out what appears to be unreasonable in their operation. Let us select a Class,—such as is found in every section of the Methodist family,—composed of twenty individuals. Here is one of superior judgment and mature piety, called "the leader." Several others, of sterling piety and unblameable behaviour, are glad to avail themselves of

his instruction. A half-hearted professor, a backslider in heart, a penitent inquirer after mercy, one who joined the Society under deep religious impressions, which he has allowed to pass away, and two or three youths recently converted to God, who seem to think of nothing but the smile and love of their Heavenly Father, fill up the complement of numbers. This little company can meet, for spiritual edification, with the greatest propriety, and in confident expectation of the most blessed results. But let some weighty, difficult, embarrassing matter of discipline or government arise; are we to take these several persons as precisely equal in ability to decide on such a case? Can it be the most excellent way to congregate a great number of such Classes for the decision of such a difficult matter, and refer it to the votes of all present, when it must be evident that many of them are altogether incompetent to judge of the case? But we shall be told, that in a well-ordered Christian community the best informed and judicious part of the meeting will, in every case, lead the assembly to a wise and just decision. It may not always be so. Persons are not unfrequently earnest and obstinate in proportion to their ignorance and incapacity. But, granting the allegation to be true, is it not then patent, that the sage and experienced alone ought to have the consideration of the business? Have not the minds of those to whom God has not given the gift of "governments" been unduly excited and harassed, and to no good purpose? If in such a case, by the influence of the intelligent members, a sound and sensible decision is obtained, it is not by means of the democratic constitution of the meeting, but in defiance of it.

It will, however, be said, that the course recommended is substantially that suggested above, namely, allowing the

most sensible and intelligent of the members of the church to decide these difficult matters, as representatives of the whole Body. But this plan, according to the views we entertain, is unsound in principle, and rests on assumptions which are untrue. We are told that, as a representative, the leader should fairly give the sentiments of his Class. He, therefore, their teacher and superior, is thus bound to consult those whom from week to week he instructs and reproves, and to adulterate his own opinion and judgment by infusing their inexperience and ignorance into the vote which he has to tender. It will be seen and recognised, by every spiritually-minded man who has studied the subject, that there is not the remotest analogy between this kind of representation and that which obtains in commercial and political affairs. A company of persons, who have invested a large sum of money in an enterprise, elect a few men to represent them in watching over their interests and managing the concern. These are bound not only to promote the best interests of their proprietary, according to their own judgment, but to some extent to consult the wishes, and to be influenced by the judgment, of such proprietary. So, when a man is sent as a representative to Parliament, he is very frequently selected on account of some expression of his political views, or the enunciation of some party creed. Chosen on these grounds, he is bound to be consistent, and ought to hold himself responsible to his constituents for his fidelity.

Secular and political analogies fail.

Something very similar may obtain in a steward in a religious Society, who is intrusted with the disposal of funds for religious purposes; but in spiritual offices, involving spiritual duties, the case is totally different. Here, whatever may be required of the people in the way of submission and consent, the authority to make the

This opposition to Methodist polity not sustained by scriptural proof.

appointment does not arise from them and ascend upward, but comes from the Head of the church and descends downward.

A striking exhibition of this view is given by St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xii. The united church is compared to a human body, and the different offices and operations to be performed are represented by the various members of the body, for the purpose of showing the unity of the whole, and reproving any approach to complaint or murmuring in those who occupy an inferior position, as well as to check any tendency to pride or vain-glory in those placed in more prominent stations. And it is observable that we are not left, even from the obvious sense of the figure, to infer that the members did not agree among themselves as to the places they should severally occupy, but are distinctly told, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him." Does not this language, in its connexion, positively teach that a person's position in the church, as an active worker for its good, is determined immediately and specially by God, and not by the vote of a meeting? If it be answered, that all that is intended is, that the people only discern, recognise, and carry into effect the divine will; we again ask, Where is this *vox populi, vox Dei*, doctrine taught in the New Testament? Nothing more clearly shows how hardly the advocates of this view are pressed for scriptural proof than the fact that they are compelled to cite the appointment of Matthias to the apostleship by lot, in the presence of the one hundred and twenty disciples, before, indeed, the church was formed by the giving of the Holy Ghost. In fact, there was no election at all, but the matter was referred immediately to the decision of God; and it is very doubtful whether this was by divine direc-

All appointment to office in the church divine.

tion, or met with the divine approval; for no further mention is made of Matthias as one of the twelve apostles. Yet this is the only instance that can be cited from the New Testament.

But if this view of the case could be sustained, would it justify the pretension set up, that all officers and ministers in the church, being appointed by the people, are responsible to them? If the people only recognise and admit the endowment and appointment of God, on what scriptural ground is this right claimed? On what reasonable ground? Leaders and local preachers are selected and placed in office because of their superior ability and gifts. Ministers are taken from these on account of their still more eminent endowments. Yet, according to this theory, the greater are to be responsible to, and judged by, the less. Without some specific scriptural authority we cannot receive such views, however they may be smoothed by choice phrases culled from the vocabulary of political democracy, or their opposites be condemned as priestcraft and tyranny.

In the absence of all explicit scriptural teaching, we should steadily adhere to this determination: but this is not our position. There are directions and authoritative teaching in the New Testament on this subject. In the chapter already referred to, we are told, "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." "God hath set;" that is, as Barnes explains it, "has appointed, constituted, ordained." Again: "But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.....And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors

and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Ephes. iv. 7, 11, 12.) Here also we have the same assertion of the divine appointment of the persons who filled the several church offices. Nor is the information afforded by the writings of this apostle less explicit as to the agency in the church, by which persons so graciously qualified for respective positions of usefulness are to be recognised and formally placed in office; but this is not spoken of as a majority of the church. Paul, writing to Timothy, reminds him of his solemn designation to the sacred office in these words: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." (1 Tim. iv. 14.) This, taken in connexion with another reference to the same subject, (2 Tim. i. 6,) shows that he was appointed to the sacred office by the apostle in conjunction with several presbyters; but no mention is made of the people, or of their co-operation.

This divine appointment discerned and carried into effect by the ministry.

Further, the apostle gave to this young minister a most elaborate and exact detail of the qualifications which should be found in all who desired to be ministers of the Gospel; (1 Tim. iii. 1–10;) and also pointed out the duty of the church toward those who sustained the sacred office. He then adds, "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure." (1 Tim. v. 21, 22.) A host of commentators, and amongst them Whitby, Macknight, Pyle, Dr. Adam Clarke, Hewlett, Benson, Wesley, and Barnes, suppose this injunction as to the laying on of

hands to refer to the ordination of ministers, or the appointment of persons to offices in the church. And if so, this very solemn charge will serve to prove that Timothy was responsible to God for the right discharge of this duty. He might consult and take advice, and perhaps ought to do so; but no one, giving fair weight to the apostle's words, can suppose that the selection and appointment of such persons belonged of right to a popular assembly, in which he might sit as an assessor, simply to register their will. This opinion is further confirmed by a similar injunction in the Second Epistle: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (ii. 2.) "This," Barnes justly observes, "is a clear warrant for ministers to set apart others for the sacred office." We refer specially to this commentator, not that we particularly approve his views, but because those who advocate the opinions which we controvert, regard him as their great authority.

The entire scope of the Epistle to Titus is to the same effect. He also is spoken of as invested with authority to supply what was wanting, and to rectify what was amiss. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." (Titus i. 4.) Then follow directions for judging the characters of such persons; after which the apostle says, "For there are many unruly and vain talkers, whose mouths must be stopped." (i. 10.) And again: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition reject." (iii. 10.) With all these scriptural proofs of ministerial authority and responsibility before us, are we to believe that the people everywhere were invested with supreme power in the church, and

exercised a rightful *veto* on all the appointments and disciplinary action of Christian ministers?

But it is confidently asserted that the New Testament speaks of "a higher court of legislation,—a council or synod," and that "in its constitution we see the ministry and laity combined." The plea for this is drawn from the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which, it is dogmatically asserted, sustains the above allegation. Notwithstanding the positiveness of this assertion, we are quite willing to place the entire question on the proof of its truth.

Bearing of the apostolic decision (Acts xv.) on this subject.

First, it is clearly stated, (verse 2,) that the church at Antioch did not refer the case to the members of the church at Jerusalem for decision. For anything that appears in the narrative, they might have thought themselves as competent to decide the question as their brethren in Judea. The language of the sacred text clearly says, "They determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of them, should go up to Jerusalem"—unto the church there? Certainly not, but —"unto the apostles and elders about this question." When they arrived, they were received of the church, and of the "apostles and elders," (verse 4,) and to this united meeting they declared the subject of their inquiry. It is equally clear that there and then "certain of the Pharisees which believed"—whether simply members or elders, we cannot tell—"rose up," and maintained that "it was needful to circumcise" the Gentile believers, "and to command them to keep the law of Moses." (Verse 5.) But then it is certain, that this mixed meeting did not decide the question. For, in the verse which immediately follows, it is said, "And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." (Verse 6.) Upon

this verse Dr. Adam Clarke observes, "This was the first council ever held in the Christian church; and we find that it was composed of the apostles and elders simply." And this council decided the case under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the authority of revealed truth.

But then it is urged, as if the fact were a triumphant refutation of the above statement, that the letters sent with greeting to the brethren of the Gentile churches were written in the names of "the apostles, and elders, and brethren." (Verse 23.) This is freely admitted: but what does it prove? The apostles and elders having met and given their decision, we are told by the inspired narrator, in a new paragraph, that it "pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas." (Verse 22.) To the mind of one accustomed to investigate questions of this kind, the case is remarkably clear. The messengers from Antioch were received by the whole church with the apostles and elders; when some persons, probably laymen, feeling a deep interest in the matter, delivered their sentiments respecting it. Then the apostles and elders formally met, considered the question, and gave their decision. The members of the church were then informed of the result; and, fully concurring in it, they united with the apostles and elders in accrediting messengers to the church of Antioch, informing them of the satisfactory settlement of the difficult business. This statement must not be taken as an exposition or commentary: it is in fact the precise statement of the text. For, in the following chapter, when these messengers went forth on their mission to the Gentile churches, it is said, "They delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jeru-

salem." (xvi. 4.) The case is, indeed, so clear, that Barnes, the most liberal of commentators, is constrained to say, "The apostles and elders deliberated on it, and decided it." Not only therefore does this case not give any support to the theory that the people of right form the supreme authority in the church: it fails to afford any countenance to the opinion that they are entitled to a co-ordinate power with the pastorate. In this very remarkable instance, although their presence is mentioned, and their concurrence in the judgment given plainly stated, they are in the most marked manner isolated from the ruling power, which is repeatedly and emphatically stated to be composed of apostles and elders.

Entire failure of this theory. The Wesleyan view of the pastoral office, and the means employed to sustain it.

Having shown reason for rejecting the principles on which the Wesleyan polity has been impugned, as being opposed to the scriptural rights and liberties of the people; we proceed to the more agreeable task of pointing out the prominent peculiarities of the system as it existed in 1797, with the connexional reasons and scriptural authority by which they are supported.

Here we have to notice, in the first place, the view which the Wesleyan economy takes of the pastoral office, and the means it has devised to sustain it. The position occupied by Wesley, as the head of the Connexion to the time of his death, was fully stated in the preceding volume. In this capacity he undoubtedly possessed absolute power. He could admit and expel members or preachers according to his own will. This power was generally exercised through the Conference, or by the agency of preachers in the several Circuits, or after he had taken counsel with judicious friends. Still he unquestionably possessed this power. We are not now defending the propriety of his retaining it, much less

maintaining that this mode of government ought to exist in any matured Christian church; but simply stating the fact, that as Societies were formed, chapels built, and the Connexion arose into existence, this power gradually and almost imperceptibly accrued to Wesley, and he retained it to the day of his death.

It is also patent, that, by the "Deed of Declaration," Wesley devolved this power on the Conference, meaning, as his letter clearly shows, that it should be exercised in common by all the preachers in full Connexion. The Conference was therefore entitled to exercise the power which the Founder of Methodism previously held. This has been stoutly denied; and it has been maintained that the local meetings,—such as Leaders' Meetings, Local Preachers' Meetings, and Quarterly Meetings,—exercised a sort of independent jurisdiction in their several departments and localities. The award of power, by the Deed of Declaration, from Wesley to the Conference is accordingly represented as a grant of authority to that assembly over their own members; and, as a consequence, that all the interference of the Conference with the affairs of the people, in legislation or government, from 1791, was so much arbitrary and unwarrantable encroachment of the preachers on the liberties and rights of the people.

It is scarcely necessary to do more than mention this extravagant allegation to any one possessing the slightest acquaintance with early Methodist history, in order to its refutation. But we refer to a few facts, to remove all doubt on this important point.

The local meetings referred to never had, during Wesley's life, either legislative or executive power. They simply performed the several functions with which they were charged, and went no further. This will appear manifest

from a very few references to the first volume of this work. From the outset of Wesley's career to his death changes were almost continually going on, occasioned by the development and expansion of the Connexion; but none of them arose from these so-called local jurisdictions. Circuits were originated and constantly altered, frequently no doubt with the consent, and sometimes by the desire, of the people; but the change was always made by Wesley or the Conference. In 1776, it was reported, that in Ireland some of the Leaders' Meetings were held without connexion with, or dependence on, the assistant preacher; "on which it was formally declared, 'We have no such custom in the three kingdoms: it is overturning our discipline from the foundations. Either let them act under the direction of the assistant, or let them meet no more.'" * So that the presence of the assistant, as Wesley's representative, or acting under his immediate direction, was essential to the existence of these meetings. When visiting Dublin in 1771, Wesley found the Society in great disorder, and on inquiry discovered the cause to be a want of attention to the fundamental rule just referred to: he accordingly drew up a paper defining the several duties and offices of leaders, stewards, and Leaders' Meetings, which is decisive as to their having no legislative or independent power.† Nor are we left in ignorance as to Wesley's purpose concerning the government of the Connexion after his death. Speaking of his great power and his manner of exercising it, he says, "You seem likewise to have a wrong idea of a Conference. For above six years after my return to England there was no such thing. I then desired some of our preachers to meet me, in order to advise, not control, me. And you may observe, they

* See vol. i., p. 633. † See vol. i., pp. 637–639.

had no power at all, but what I exercised through them. I chose to exercise the power which God had given me in this manner, both to avoid ostentation, and gently to habituate the people to obey them when I should be taken from their head."* And this plan and purpose he consistently and constantly pursued; so that if at any time we wish to know the real nature of Methodist discipline, or the terms of Methodist law, we must refer, not to records of local meetings, nor even to Wesley's Works, but to the Minutes of Conference. It is therefore an undoubted fact that Wesley exercised this power during his life, and at his death transferred it to the Conference. And this fact, which many have ignorantly or factiously denied, one of the ablest of the censors of Wesleyan Methodism admits and laments.† We see, therefore, that the various institutions of Methodism were brought by Wesley under the cognizance of the Conference, and "were defined and established then, or afterwards laid aside, or modified, as the case required; that the Society submitted to the government of Mr. Wesley and the preachers associated with him, and became in course of time accustomed to look up to Mr. Wesley and the preachers assembled in Conference, as the supreme authority; and that the Deed of Declaration, by securing to the Conference its right of appointing to the chapels after Mr. Wesley's death, did, in point of fact, confirm it in possession of all its powers and prerogatives, as the supreme authority of the Connexion."‡

The preceding chapter has traced the progress of the struggles which arose soon after Wesley's death until their

* Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 133.

† Rev. Dr. W. Cooke's "Wesleyan Reform," &c., p. 27.

‡ Dr. Beecham's "Constitution of Methodism," p. 30.

termination in 1797. We are now concerned to know the effect which these arrangements had upon the constitution of Methodism.

The effects which the legislation of 1795 and 1797 had on the constitution of Methodism.

The first cause of disquiet, and the question most keenly contested, was of a spiritual nature; namely, the administration of the sacraments in Methodist chapels by Methodist preachers. This, as we have seen, was settled in a manner which, although it made no formal separation from the Church, enabled every Society which earnestly desired it, to have the sacraments administered by its own preachers. In a few years the practice was all but universal, and thus one principal obstacle to the church *status* of the Connexion was removed.

The other changes mainly related to connexional discipline. As already stated, the Conference was left by Wesley in possession of supreme—it is hardly too much to say, absolute—power. The questions therefore arose, Is this full amount of power to be retained? Can its exercise be so modified and guarded, that the people may have entire confidence in its temperate and judicious administration? As shown in the last chapter, the Conference believed that fidelity to the principles and policy of Wesley, a religious estimate of the scriptural rights and responsibilities of the pastoral office, no less than their firm conviction of what was necessary for the consolidation and perpetuity of the best interests of the Connexion, united to induce them to reject every proposal which would remove the supreme power in the Connexion from their body, whether this were attempted by the introduction of laymen into the Conference, or by giving an independent authority to any general or local meeting. This power was therefore preserved intact and inviolate.

On the other point the Conference was not only not

inflexible, but evinced a readiness to give candid attention to every proposal for preventing an improper exercise of the power with which they were intrusted; and consequently great concessions were made to the wishes of the laity.

Substance of the disciplinary part of the Plan of Pacification.

The first important alterations were devised, as previously detailed, in 1795, in *the Plan of Pacification*. And, as might have been expected, the applicants having been in this instance almost wholly trustees, the disciplinary arrangements then made were mainly concessions to that class of officials; but these are preceded by a distinct recognition of the supremacy of the Conference. These regulations consist of eight articles, of which the following is a brief summary.

The first recognises the rightful authority of the Conference to appoint preachers to Methodist chapels, and prohibits trustees from interfering with such appointments, or expelling persons so appointed.

The second provides that, if a majority of the trustees, or a majority of the stewards and leaders of any Society, believe that any preacher appointed for their Circuit is immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities, or that he has broken any of the rules, they have power to summon the preachers of the District, and all the trustees, stewards, and leaders of that Circuit; and if a majority of such meeting find such charge well founded, such preacher shall be considered as removed from that Circuit, and his place be supplied by the District Committee.

The third enacts that if any preacher so charged shall refuse to submit to such a trial, he shall be suspended until the next Conference; and if any trustees expel from a chapel any preacher appointed by Conference on their own authority, the preachers appointed to that Circuit shall not

preach in such chapel until the next Conference, or until such a trial takes place.

The fourth provides that if the trustees of their own authority expel a preacher from a chapel, the chairman of the District shall have power to call a meeting of preachers in the District, with such trustees of that Circuit as have not offended; and that if it appear to such a meeting desirable that a new chapel shall be built in that place before the next Conference, measures shall be forthwith taken for proceeding with such a building. But no step shall be taken towards such a building, before this meeting has been held.

The other rules mainly refer to the then existing troubles in the Connexion. The above provisions will be admitted to be very important, especially as to the protection which they afford the whole Connexion against the retention of improper persons in the ministry.

And of the regulations of 1797.

The regulations of 1797 are more numerous, as well as more varied in their range of subjects. The first section refers to questions of finance; the second, to other temporal matters.

With respect to finance, the Conference promised in future to publish full accounts, annually, of the Yearly Collection, and the Kingswood School. But the most important of these arrangements was that which required all bills for deficiencies to preachers, for which the Circuits could not provide, to be first produced in the Quarterly Meetings of such Circuits, and verified by the signature of the Circuit stewards. Previously, the preacher took his own account to the District Meeting, and it was surmised that sometimes extravagant demands had been made. By the plan now laid down, the account was first submitted where all the particulars of the case were known.

In the next section it was provided, first, that no Circuit should in future be divided, till such division had been approved by the respective Quarterly Meetings; and that no other temporal matter should be transacted by the District Committees, until the consent of the respective Quarterly Meetings had been given.

The third regulation provided that no person should be admitted into Society, after the Leaders' Meeting had declared such admission improper; and no one should be expelled for immorality, until such crime had been proved in a Leaders' Meeting.

The fourth declared, that no leader or steward should be appointed or removed from office, without the consent of the Leaders' Meeting; and that no person should be placed on the Local Preachers' Plan, without the consent of the Local Preachers' Meeting. Explanations were also given of two rules previously made. The first stated that the rule which forbad any local preacher from preaching in any Circuit but his own, without a recommendation from the Circuit in which he lived, was intended to prevent unauthorized persons giving invitations which would involve Circuits or individuals in expense. In the other, which related to the prohibition against calling meetings for the purpose of considering the state of the Society or Connexion, it was stated that, as the Leaders' Meeting is the proper meeting for the Society, and the Quarterly Meeting for the Circuit, other meetings are regarded as unnecessary and injurious; but that, notwithstanding, such meetings might be held, when sanctioned by the superintendent, he being allowed to attend, if he wished to do so.

The fifth stated that the preachers had selected all the rules made before the death of Wesley, which they found

permanently applicable to the government of the Connexion, and had "solemnly signed them," declaring their "approbation of them," and their "determination to comply with them."

The next announced that the Conference had "determined that all the rules which relate to the Societies, leaders, stewards, local preachers, trustees, and Quarterly Meetings, shall be published with the Rules of Society, for the convenience of all the members."

Lastly, it was enacted, "That if at any time the Conference see it necessary to make any new rule for the Societies at large, and such rule shall be objected to in the first Quarterly Meeting in any Circuit, and if the major part of that meeting, in conjunction with the preachers, be of opinion that the enforcing of such rule in that Circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that Circuit, it shall not be enforced, in opposition to the judgment of such Quarterly Meeting, before the second Conference. Nevertheless, the Quarterly Meetings rejecting a new rule shall not, by publications, public meetings, or otherwise, make that rule a cause of contention; but shall strive by every means to preserve the peace of the Connexion."

Prominent elements of the constitution of Methodism after these changes had been made.

We shall now consider the constitution of the Connexion after these changes were made, and its accordance with holy Scripture.

It is clear that not one of the alterations was designed, in any degree, to alter the connexional character of Methodism; or to give independent action to any Society or Circuit. The connexional principle was fully preserved, and with it, as a natural result, the itinerant system.

Secondly, none of these alterations, nor, indeed, all of them united, took away the ruling power of the pastorate,

or affected the position of the Conference, as the fountain of law, and the supreme court of appeal.

Nor, thirdly, did these changes take away the authority, or diminish the efficient action, of the District Committees. Much of the controversy raised on this topic might have been obviated by one simple consideration. The District Committees were appointed to afford the Connexion in its several localities that effective supervision which had been lost by the death of Wesley. The District Meeting is therefore competent to do all that Wesley could do, with only this limitation,—that as he would act in consistency with himself, so the District Committee must act in consistency with the resolutions of Conference, and can only possess authority from one Conference to another. The terms of the original minute are: "The assistant of a Circuit shall have authority to summon the preachers of his District, who are in full Connexion, on any critical case, which according to the best of his judgment merits such an interference.....And their decision shall be final till the meeting of the next Conference."*

It is clear, therefore, that the notion held by some persons, that the District Committee was only intended for the trial of an accused preacher, is altogether a mistake. The minute gave the superintendent of a Circuit power to summon such a meeting "*on any critical case.*" This version of the law is confirmed by the fact, that, as soon as the arrangement was made, and Dr. Coke was appointed to preside at the next Irish Conference, this rule was made: "No letters of complaint, or on Circuit business, shall be written to England on account of this appointment. The Committee of the Districts shall deter-

* Minutes, vol. i., p. 241.

mine all appeals whatsoever during the intervals of Conference: and therefore all applications on Society business during the said intervals, which cannot be determined by the assistants of the Circuits, shall be made to the Committees only."* This clearly shows, as Dr. Beecham has well observed, "that Dr. Coke, although their president, was not intended to fill Mr. Wesley's place as General Superintendent; that the new jurisdiction of the District Committees was appointed with that view; and that therefore they were to apply, not to Dr. Coke, but to the District Committees."† The Minutes of 1792 and 1793, fairly interpreted, fully sustain this view.

Wesleyan Methodist polity, therefore, as established by preceding enactment and usage, and modified and settled by the Plan of Pacification and the regulations of 1797, left the "United Societies" a Connexion, under the government of the Conference as supreme, with District Committees in possession of all necessary power for efficient superintendence in the intervals of Conference; all this authority being confined within certain prescribed limits, by various powers conferred on local meetings, principally composed of the laity.

The question which now arises will form the closing discussion of this chapter:—Is such a union of numerous congregations into one Body, and governed in this manner, so scriptural in its organization as to be entitled to rank as one of the churches of Christ?

The Wesleyan connexional principle in

By the operation of this connexional principle, all the several Societies, throughout the land, make one Body. Not only are the doctrines the same, the discipline the

* "Minutes," vol. i., p. 246.

† Dr. Beecham's "Constitution of Wesleyan Methodism," p. 24.

full accordance with Scripture.

same, the laws, regulations, and mode of action the same; but there is a real and solid bond of union by the incorporation of the whole under one ruling head. If the financial economy of the community also is, like it, entirely unfettered by political or geographical boundaries, both contain large and expansive tendencies, and the system and its government possess every appliance for continued progress. If favoured with the blessing of the Divine Head of the Church, Wesleyan Methodism, without violence to its principles or economy, and without any alteration in or addition to its fundamental laws, might spread the Gospel throughout this kingdom, its colonies, and the world. It cannot be denied that these features are strikingly analogous to those predicated of the spiritual kingdom of God which Christ set up in the world. Compare this Connexion with any other church or collection of churches. Popery exhibits the subjection of all to the *dictum* of one would-be-infallible man. It does not, it cannot, exhibit the kingdom of God; it is as political, secular, and worldly as any other kingdom of the earth. The Church of England, free in some measure from this objection, and possessing great and important means for extending and conserving the fruits of Gospel influence in this country and our colonies, has no direct appliances for spreading the glad tidings of grace to other countries. Congregational churches, from their isolation, must be ill prepared for great and extended aggressions on the wickedness of the world. Wesleyan Methodism, therefore, whatever its defects, unquestionably possesses, in its connexional character, one of the most prominent features ascribed to the church of Christ in the New Testament: it stands before us as a manifestation of the kingdom of God.

But, does this union of congregations and Societies find parallel or countenance in the New Testament? We have often been told that the believers in each town or city not only constituted one church, but actually met together for worship "in one place." Is this possible? In Jerusalem three thousand souls were converted on the day of Pentecost. Afterward, the number reached "five thousand." (Acts iv. 4.) After the death of Ananias, "multitudes of men and women" were added. (v. 14.) Still the "word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." (vi. 7.) Before any buildings for Christian worship were raised, when all the power of the government and priesthood of Judea was opposed to the Christian cause, where could all these thousands, these multitudes, worship together in one building? The supposition is absurd; and the conclusion is inevitable, that these persons met in different localities, sometimes in private dwellings, at others in those large upper rooms so plentifully provided in Jerusalem for passover occasions, and frequently at such places as could be procured in the surrounding villages.

The same course would be taken when the Gospel was introduced into other Hebrew or Gentile cities. Hence we so frequently meet with such phrases as "Priscilla and Aquila," and "the church that is in their house;" (Rom. xvi. 3, 4;) "Nymphas, and the church which is in his house;" (Col. iv. 15;) "Unto Philemon—and the church in thy house;" (Philemon 1, 2.) These were certainly places where the word was preached, and Christian believers assembled for worship; and from whence the light of the Gospel radiated to other parts of the cities and surrounding countries. This would call for an increase of presbyters;

which after a while, and for the sake of order, led to the appointment of one of these as the chief director in each locality. These were the primitive bishops or overseers. Every one acquainted with the operations of Methodism will perceive that this sketch precisely indicates the Circuit action of the Wesleyan community.

It is manifest, then, that the primitive churches were a collection of several congregations associated together for purposes of mutual edification, counsel, and strength; having several ministers preaching the word, and taking the oversight of believers. The Circuit arrangements of Wesleyan Methodism are, therefore, justified on the ground of utility, and are clearly analogous to the practice of the apostles and the primitive teachers of our holy faith.

Beyond this important particular, primitive Christianity, like Wesleyan Methodism, was connexional. This is seen in all the arrangements adopted for the government of the church. Paul, on his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, communicated with Peter and James. The manner in which this information is conveyed to us proves that Paul needed no recognition or authority from them. Strong in the assurance of the divine call to the apostleship, he declares, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. i. 8.) Yet, at the first opportunity, he makes himself known to the apostles, and through them enables those who "knew not his face" to "glorify God in" him. (Verses 22–24.) The circumstances narrated in the second chapter of Galatians afford more explicit evidence on this subject. The special revelation under which Paul acted when he put himself, and the converted Gentiles who were the fruits of his ministry, in immediate communication with the apostles,—

his great care to avoid giving offence, the circumcision of Timothy, his controversy with Peter,—all stand out in proof of the connexional character of the primitive church. But for this, each congregation might have devised its own laws. But this was not to be done: the pervading life of the body led to an identity of doctrine and practice, and required the adoption of measures applicable to the whole.

The remarkable case given in Acts xv. is still more important in its bearing on this subject. Men, we are told, came down from Judea unto Antioch, and taught the brethren, saying, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Paul, who did not regard himself as a whit behind the chiefest of the apostles, was then at Antioch: Barnabas, who was scarcely less than an apostle, was there also. Why, then, could not these apostolic men, with the presbyters of Antioch, have settled the matter at once? Upon every principle of Independency, or of national churches, this could and would have been done. But, like Wesleyan Methodism, the Christianity of the apostolic age was a great Connexion; and, consequently, instead of settling this disputed point at Antioch, Paul and Barnabas were deputed to go up to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem "about this question;" in order that, at a central meeting of apostles and elders, the subject might be considered under the influence of the authority and teaching of holy Scripture, and an authoritative and permanent rule be elicited, for the guidance of the Christian church in all places and times.

The connexional character of the apostolic church is further seen in all the regulations necessary to the appointment, recognition, and reception of ministers. The degrading and democratic notion, that the minister is paid by the people, and is therefore the servant of the people,

and must be appointed by the people, had no place in the churches founded by the apostles, and reared under their guidance. It is freely admitted, that persons appointed to this sacred office were required to be men *of good report.* A man whose conduct was such as to lay him under suspicion, would certainly have been rejected by the apostles. It was also necessary that they should "first be proved;" (1 Tim. iii. 10;) which seems to imply, that their gifts and graces in the work of the ministry should, before their full appointment, be subjected to the judgment of the pious members of the church. But the authority of the minister to enter upon the sacred office was not derived from the people, but from the apostles and elders. The church at Corinth was charged to receive Timothy as a minister of Christ, working "the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. xvi. 10.) The same church was required to receive Titus and another minister in love and honour. (2 Cor. viii. 18, 23, 24.) By the same authority Titus was sent to Crete,—not by the appointment of the people, but of the apostle. (Titus i. 5.) This is also the doctrine of the Epistles to Timothy, throughout. Here, then, the connexional character of the primitive churches is proved by the important fact, that ministers were commissioned to special and important duties in the several churches, not by the vote of the members of these particular churches, but by apostolic authority.

One further evidence of the connexionalism of the primitive churches, and illustration of its character, is that it extended to financial affairs. This may be a startling assertion to those who regard all the monetary arrangements of the church as modern inventions, altogether inconsistent with the purity and simplicity of the apostolic age. It is true that, in many respects, the objects for which ministers now appeal

to the benevolence of Christian churches differ from those of primitive times; but this diversity does not affect the principle of action. Was it left to the people of Corinth or Galatia to settle by vote whether there should be collections in those churches for helping the pious poor at Jerusalem? The apostolic requirement is imperative: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem." (1 Cor. xvi. 1–3.) Here are many important points, deserving lengthened observation: we can, however, only glance at a few particulars.

1. The collection is appointed by apostolic authority: Paul "orders" it; and it is not confined to any particular locality. As it had been directed in Galatia, which was not a town, but a province, so it is commanded at Corinth.

2. This provision was to be regularly and systematically made *on the first day of the week*. Paul had no sympathy with those who think the contribution of money, even for religious purposes, too carnal for the Sabbath. After taking one of the loftiest flights into the highest region of inspired revelation,—after ranging through all the mysterious terrors of death and the grave, and contemplating all the wonders and glories of the resurrection,—his holy soul turns at once to what in his estimation was a kindred subject, and he writes, "Now concerning the collection."

3. The apostle lays down the rule which is to regulate all Christian giving. The contribution is not to be

measured by the opinion of the giver, but by the extent of his means,—"*as God hath prospered him.*"

4. While Paul does not leave it to the judgment of the people whether the collection is to be made or not, he clearly and distinctly admits their right to see that their contributions are properly applied: "Whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send."

How exactly does all this accord with the views already propounded of the Church as the kingdom of God; and how obvious and perfect the agreement of these principles and usages with Wesleyan Methodism! There is, however, another point in which the connexionalism of the primitive church, and its harmony with Wesleyan usages, are yet more strikingly seen. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality." (2 Cor. viii. 12–14.) The principle here laid down is equality of burden: every one is to give according to what he hath, that each church may contribute in proportion to its means. This is not the case either with the Establishment or with Dissenting churches generally, where some congregations provide a splendid income for the minister, while others leave him in miserable poverty. This inequality is, however, guarded against in the Wesleyan Connexion; at all events, an arrangement is devised to meet this difficulty. The motto of the Home Mission and Contingent Fund might be: "Not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: but by an equality."

Ministerial rule asserted and commanded in the New Testament.

The scriptural character of the pastoral authority has been involved in our preceding remarks; but a few confirmatory proofs, arising from the fact that ministers are commanded to rule the church, are held responsible for ruling it well, and that this command is not given to any other class of officers or people in the church,—may be added.

As to pastoral rule, the testimony of holy Scripture is explicit: "The presbyters which are among you I exhort, who am also a presbyter.....Feed the flock of God which is among you." (1 Peter v. 1, 2.) The Greek word rendered "feed," literally means, "to perform the office of a shepherd towards a flock," "to feed, tend, rule, govern." This meaning is fully sustained by the sense in which the word is used in other scriptures. In Matthew ii. 6 it refers to the government of Christ, and is rendered, "shall *rule* My people Israel." In the Apocalypse it is several times found, (ii. 27; xii. 15; xix. 15,) always in the sense of *ruling*. And this is its true meaning, in the passage first quoted; for the apostle goes on to say, "taking the oversight thereof," a phrase which clearly indicates "superintendency, direction, government." Homer speaks of Hector as *episcopos* of Troy; and the same title was given to the officers charged with the organization of the states dependent on Athens. Indeed, it was the term currently used to signify "a guiding oversight in the public administration." We need only add the following texts: "Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." (Acts xx. 28.) "A bishop must be one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care

of the church of God?" (1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.) "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour." (1 Tim. v. 17.)

Several of these scriptures not only command ministerial rule, but indicate responsibility on that account; and others are still more decisive. Paul speaks of the work of the ministry as the rearing up of a building. "As a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon:" for "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Can any language more clearly teach ministerial responsibility?

On the other hand, we search in vain for exhortations to the people to watch over and direct public affairs. We meet with no directions as to the conduct of public assemblies, or their responsibility for the purity of the church. But we do find such as these: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account." (Heb. xiii. 17.) "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow." (Heb. xiii. 7.)

The claims of the Methodist pastorate, therefore, as exercised in the Conference, District Meetings, and general superintendence of the Societies, are fully sustained by the authority of holy Scripture. "But," it is objected, "you invest the priesthood with Popish power, and make the laity nothing." It is most lamentable to know the extensive and fatal influence which this false and silly objection has exercised. Wesleyan Methodism make nothing of the laity! Who, or what, origi-

nated and brought into extensive usefulness the lay element, as we now see it in every direction? Do not the useful and energetic laymen, who by thousands are filling important offices in the church, owe their public existence to Wesley and to Methodism? Who first employed local preachers, whose countless hosts every Sabbath proclaim the truth of God in every part of the land? Who taught leaders to watch over the souls of their brethren in Class-meetings? What agency made Prayer-meetings all but universal, and gave such a religious direction to Sunday-schools, that the teachers now—not satisfied with imparting the knowledge of letters—imbue the minds of the children with the saving truths of the Gospel? We boldly challenge the verdict of Protestant Christendom, whether every active, energetic, zealous layman does not owe a deep debt of gratitude to Wesley and to Methodism. If Methodism had done nothing else in the world, it would have achieved a glorious triumph by emancipating Christian laymen from the supineness and apathy which had covered the church for ages, and opening up to them a wide field of Christian usefulness.

Methodism pre-eminently favourable to the religious rights of the laity.

"Still," it is urged, "whatever practical good may have resulted from the system, its theory places the laity in vassalage and subserviency." This is altogether a mistake. The theory of Methodism regards the whole church as one body, according to the scripture already cited: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular:" (1 Cor. xii. 12–30:) the body, of which the Spirit of Christ is the life,—the all-pervading, all-directing energy; giving harmony, unity, and power to all its parts. Of this body, Wesleyans, guided by New Testament teaching, regard the ministry as the head under Christ to direct the whole system; not of lordly right, as isolated from the body;

Theory of Methodism.

In agreement with Scripture.

but in subjection to Christ, and as united by a common interest and vital connexion with all the members. Indeed, the maxim of Methodism is, "A place for every man, and every man in his place;" and while each devotes himself to the duties of his own sphere, as unto Christ, there will be "no schism in the body."

Undoubtedly there have been exceptions to this state of spiritual health. Ministers have sometimes, from infirmity, abused the powers with which they have been intrusted, have given pain to truly devoted servants of Christ, and inflicted injury on His cause. And we have seen very inferior members of the Body arrogate to themselves unreasonable powers, and thwart and harass meek and humble-minded ministers. But this is no more an argument against the theory we have propounded, than it would be a valid objection to a fair description of a healthy human being, to say that a man had been seen so diseased that the members of his body could not perform their usual functions.

Methodism does not assume the infallibility of any class of its members. The utmost scrutiny is made before a minister is admitted; and through all his ministerial life his morality, orthodoxy, and ability are open to impeachment, and liable to a trial in a court where the most able, influ-
ential, and pious lay members may sit and vote. It may be questioned whether any section of the church has done more to maintain the purity of its ministry, or to guard against any abuse of ministerial authority, than Methodism. Nor is there anything in the system to prevent the introduction of further provisions of this kind, when a necessity is shown. For, while it is maintained that the government of the church is mainly committed to ministers, it is fully admitted that the people have a perfect

right to require every reasonable safeguard to prevent any improper exercise of it.

Acting in the true spirit of the theory above stated, Methodism has thrown around ministerial power, both in its collective and individual action, very important protective guards. Almost the whole of the regulations of 1797 are of this character. Whether they were all that was required, is a question which we are not now called upon to decide; but they recognise the scriptural principle which we most unhesitatingly assert, that while the responsibility of ultimate authority in the church is placed in the pastorate, the laity, according to the endowments with which the Divine Head has favoured them, and the posts of usefulness to which He has called them, have a scriptural right to exercise an influence on the government of the Connexion. No course of action could more clearly recognise this principle than that taken by the Conference in 1795 and 1797.

All Circuit action, as well as every provision for cases of emergency, is based on this principle. Those who insist on representation and lay delegates, in their advocacy of such polity frequently misapprehend and mis-state the Methodist economy, and, as we believe, contravene the teaching of Scripture, and greatly err as to the scriptural means of securing a scriptural object. This object is undoubtedly to obtain the concurrent judgment and harmonious action of the whole church, that we may "be all of one mind." This is attempted in the economy before us, by blending the judgment of leaders, stewards, and trustees, in friendly consultation and combination in the general local direction of the Societies; and by giving to the laity a power to suspend the operation of any new law for a year, when deemed unsuitable or improper.

Methodism, therefore, as consolidated in 1797, was not

Wesleyan Methodism a scriptural church.

a schism wrought out by unauthorized teachers assuming ministerial powers; nor an aggression of ministers on the rights of the laity, consummated in the perpetuation of a spiritual tyranny. It stands before us an honest, religious organization, conformed to the teaching, and agreeable to the great principles, of holy Scripture, for the purpose of spreading the knowledge and saving power of the Gospel; and which, while retaining all those scriptural principles, is capable of adapting its plans to the different states of society throughout the world, and to the end of time. It has hitherto been eminently successful, and, although making no claim to perfection as an ecclesiastical economy, is entitled on every ground to rank as a true and influential section of the Universal Church of God.

BOOK V.

WESLEYAN METHODISM FROM THE DEATH OF WESLEY TO THE CONFERENCE OF 1816.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE DEATH OF WESLEY TO THE CONFERENCE OF 1795.

Methodism without Wesley.

In resuming our narrative of the progress of Methodism from the death of Wesley, the mind at first painfully feels the absence of him to whom under God the Connexion owed its existence. The able, laborious, and enterprising agent, by whose instrumentality this great work was originated, and principally directed for more than fifty years, was now taken away; and our mind shares in no ordinary degree the feelings of the Methodists of that day, as we are tempted to ask, Can there be Methodism without Wesley? We have carefully followed the progress of his labours, seen his unparalleled exertions, and observed his unwearied oversight, directed as it was by consummate practical wisdom; and now, as we record the course of evangelical operations carried on by the Methodist preachers, and mark the progress of the Connexion, in the absence of its founder, we feel that we are treading a new and, in some measure, a desolate path. Yet upon this path we must enter, and endeavour to trace with equal interest

and attention the labours of those who, deprived of the aid of their best earthly friend, were left to follow his steps, and fill up the measure of his toil.

Agreeably to his dying advice, the preachers pursue their usual course.

On the day of Wesley's departure a letter was sent to all the preachers throughout the Connexion,* giving them his dying injunction as to their conduct. Everywhere the direction was obeyed, and, under a deep sense of increased responsibility, the Methodist preachers laboured on, and looked forward to the approaching Conference with the greatest interest, as though in it were involved the future destiny of Methodism.

The Conference of 1791.

This Conference assembled at Manchester on the 26th of July, 1791. More than two hundred preachers were present; and who can tell with what feelings the venerable men, now in a sort of orphanage, entered upon its business? For nearly fifty years one form had invariably occupied the presidential chair, one mind had controlled their deliberations, one voice had announced their decisions, one hand

* "LONDON, CITY ROAD, *March 2nd*, 1791.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"THE melancholy period we have so long dreaded is now arrived. Our aged and honoured FATHER, *Mr. Wesley*, is no more! He was taken to Paradise this morning, in a glorious manner, after a sickness of five days. We have not time to say more at present as to his demise,—only what respects our future economy. This injunction he laid upon us and all our brethren on his death-bed, That we each continue in our respective station till the time appointed for the next Conference at Manchester. We have, therefore, no doubt but you will, with us, readily comply with his dying request; the more so, as this is consonant with the determination of the Conference held at Bristol, when he was supposed to be near death there, and confirmed in succeeding Conferences.

"We remain, dear Brother,

"Your affectionate, though sorrowful, Brethren,

"JAMES ROGERS, THOMAS RANKIN,
JOSEPH BRADFORD, GEORGE WHITFIELD."
JOHN BROADBENT,

had drawn up the "Minutes" of their "several conversations." But now the Lord has taken away their head, and he is found no more among them. Their first business is to use their franchise, and elect a president from among themselves. Realizing the gravity of the position, and solemnly acting in the fear of God, their choice fell upon William Thompson,—a man every way worthy of the pre-eminent distinction of being the first-elected president of the Methodist Conference. Looking at his contemporaries through the lights of history and tradition which now surround us, we are, perhaps, disposed to wonder why Coke, or Benson, or Bradford, or Mather, or Pawson, was not preferred to Thompson. They stood to the Founder of Methodism in a closer relation, and were men of far more prominence among their brethren and in the Connexion generally. Some have thought it was a sort of compromise between those who were regarded as the high church party and the extreme section on the other side. But we rather think that the chief reason which determined the choice was Thompson's peculiar genius for ecclesiastical polity. Brought up in the North of Ireland, he had closely studied the system of Presbyterian church-government, and was probably far ahead of his compeers in acquaintance with ecclesiastical questions. He "was a man of remarkably strong sense, a fertile genius, a clear understanding, a quick discernment, a retentive memory, and a sound judgment." "He was supposed by many to be one of the closest reasoners and most able speakers that ever sat in the Methodist Conference." * These qualities eminently fitted him for the presidential chair, and his entire future, through the "troublous times" which speedily ensued, amply justified the choice then made. Dr. Coke, perhaps

* Atmore's "Memorial."

the most prominent and laborious man of the day, was elected secretary.

The disciplinary arrangements of this Conference, and its discussions relating to the administration of the sacraments, have been fully recorded in preceding chapters. But there are a few other matters which it would not be right to omit. The number of Circuits in Great Britain and Ireland was increased from one hundred and eight to one hundred and fourteen. In the list of Circuits we find France with one preacher, William Mahy, a native of Guernsey, who had been converted under the preaching of Mr. John de Queteville. He laboured and suffered much in that island, and was instrumental in raising several Societies. A change favourable to religious liberty, and which seemed to open up a fair field of usefulness, had recently taken place in France; but these prospects were soon clouded. War broke out in the beginning of 1793; and the fearful horrors resulting from the revolutionary government, rendered the attempt to evangelize a part of that country nearly abortive.

The increase in the numbers of the members this year was eighteen hundred and twenty-five, the particulars of which are stated in a tabular form in connexion with the numbers of following years.*

We find on these Minutes, for the first time, a "list of reserve," containing the names of fifteen preachers received on trial, but not immediately appointed to ministerial work. When any vacancy occurred by the death or resignation of a minister, the place was supplied by a preacher whose name was on this "list." Dr. Coke was selected to visit the West Indies, and Committees were appointed to superintend Kingswood School, and for the examination of

* Appendix M.

missionaries, and of the accounts, letters, &c., relating to the missionary work. Although the Conference, placed in a new and embarrassing position, had many novel and arduous duties to perform, it did not overlook its proper vocation,—a vigilant oversight of the spiritual interests of the people. It published a strong protest against conformity to the world, especially in the employment of dancing-masters, and extravagant dress.

Twenty-one ministers, among whom was Richard Reece, so long and justly revered, were now received into Full Connexion; thirteen were placed on probation; five, for various reasons, were dropped from the itinerant ranks; and two finished their course and entered into rest. Duncan Wright, one of those noble soldier-preachers whose labours and successes throw such a charm over the annals of our earlier history, was a native of Scotland. Born in 1736, "not far from the lovely banks of the 'soft-winding Tay,'" and claiming kinship with the Stuarts, M'Donalds, and M'Gregors, he probably inherited a natural inclination for military life. His father—"esteemed a pretty good scholar"—gave him the best education in his power. He learnt the "Shorter Catechism," and was not "without drawings from above." "Having a bookish inclination," he often "read and wept till his head ached." He "wanted to be a Christian, but he knew not how." He could relish no employment but a soldier's life; and the day he entered the ranks he thought, "Now I have done for body and soul." He read plays, novels, and every kind of light trash which he could buy or borrow. "An old soldier reproved him for spending his time and spoiling his eyes" with such rubbish; and he borrowed the "Marrow of Modern Divinity," to show that he could read religious works. Before he got through the

"Marrow," he was "*truly*, though *gently*, convinced" of sin.

Waking, as from a dream, he found all around him "like the men of Sodom, blind and groping about for happiness; or asleep, with storms of wrath ready to burst upon their heads." "A covered battery on the castle wall" afforded him a convenient spot for prayer; and on guard he covered his head "with his watch cloak," "stopped his ears with his fingers, and spent many a happy moment in converse with God." Alleine's "Alarm" fell into his hands, and he "set apart a day of fasting and prayer, wrote out the covenant, and signed it." He heard Methodist preaching, and, like the Psalmist, literally "bathed his couch with his tears." In one of those weeping nights, he found peace with God. He soon began to preach to his comrades, and to hold class-meetings in the barracks.

After a long season of soul-barrenness, deeply mourned, he received a great accession of religious life, "like a plenteous shower upon a parched and dry land." A little persecution followed; and then came a crisis in his history. "Our major, a warm blunderer," thought it a disgrace to have a sergeant-preacher in the regiment; and he soon compassed Duncan's discharge. Wesley found him immediate service, and he entered upon ministerial life. In various parts of the United Kingdom he faithfully preached the Gospel. He re-acquired the Erse language, familiar to him when a boy, and preached to the Highlanders. Four services a day gave him "many an aching head and pained breast;" but "it was delightful to see hundreds attending his 'blundering preaching,' with streaming eyes, and attention still as night; or to hear them singing the praises of God in their own tongue."

While attending Wesley's funeral, he remarked, that it was probable he would be "the next buried in that tomb:" and so it came to pass. In a few days he was ill, and never again rallied. "O what a weight of glory will that be, when Thy weight of grace, O Lord, is now so great!"—"The Lord sets my poor heart at rest, though it is now burning with fever:"—"The Lord maketh my very bones to rejoice:"—"What I now feel is better than crowns or thrones:"—"I pass through the valley of death; but it is not dark; all is clear, all is light about me:"—"Jesus is come; He is now in my heart: let me muse awhile;"—with these and many other words did he comfort his friends, and await the coming of his Lord. "He died May 13th, 1791, having just completed the fifty-fifth year of his age."

"Gravity and steadiness were two eminent parts of his character." His piety was deep and constant. After 1763, he walked in the daily light of God's countenance, and rested not an hour without a clear witness of his acceptance. Exact and diligent in private devotion, his closet was a constant Bethel. His preaching was plain, pointed, and instructive; and many will be the crown of his rejoicing in the day of the Lord. With a taste for poetry and a good ear for music, he thoroughly appreciated Charles Wesley's noble hymns. They were the solace of his last hours; and often did he sing, with a shower of tears,

"O might I with Thy saints aspire,
The meanest of that dazzling choir,
Who chant Thy praise above;
Mixt with the bright musician band,
May I a heavenly harper stand,
And sing the song of love!"

We might naturally look for the name of JOHN WESLEY

among the obituaries of this Conference; but it is not there. The heart of his sons was deeply smitten, and their affecting statement ought to have a place in every History of Methodism. "It may be expected that the Conference make some observations on the death of Mr. Wesley; but they find themselves utterly inadequate to express their ideas and feelings on this awful and affecting event. Their souls do truly mourn for their great loss: and they trust they shall give the most substantial proofs of their veneration for the memory of their most esteemed Father and Friend, by endeavouring, with great humility and diffidence, to follow and imitate him in doctrine, discipline, and life."

Mr. Wilberforce, then member of Parliament for the county of York, forwarded to each of the assembled preachers a copy of "The evidence that appeared before a Select Committee of the House of Commons relative to the Slave Trade;" and two copies each for the president and secretary. The present was accompanied by a letter in which he complimented them on their piety and zeal, and entreated them to use their influence in getting petitions signed and presented to Parliament, praying for the abolition of the infamous traffic in slaves. The Conference sent him a polite answer, and promised to comply with his request. From a conscientious conviction of the enormous injustice and wickedness involved in this inhuman traffic, the Methodist preachers entered heartily into the work, and were instrumental, in conjunction with others, in producing a general conviction throughout the country, that the time was come when the slave trade "ought to be abolished."

Wesley's Will and Deed.

The day after Wesley's death his surviving friends thought proper to open and read his Will. This docu-

ment showed * that Wesley had bequeathed all his property, consisting entirely of printed books and copyrights, to the Connexion, subject to the charge of a sum of seventeen hundred pounds, due by marriage settlement to his brother's widow and her children, and to certain conditions specified in the Will. The executors were Messrs. John Horton, George Woolff, and William Marriott. All his manuscripts were given to Dr. Coke, Dr. Whitehead,† and Henry Moore, to be burned or published, as they might think proper.

Soon after Wesley's funeral, it was generally known that the executors intended without delay to administer to his Will, and to enter upon the performance of the duties of their trust. This fact led to the announcement, that on October 5th, 1790, subsequently to the execution of his Will, dated February 20th, 1789, Wesley had executed a Deed, conveying "all his books, tracts, pamphlets, and stock in trade, and all his copyright to all books which he

* See Appendix N.

† Dr. Whitehead, who had from childhood been brought up among Methodists, became an itinerant preacher in 1764, laboured in the work of the ministry about five years, and retired from it in 1769. He then married, and settled in business in Bristol. From thence he removed to Wandsworth, near London, where he opened a school. He then became acquainted with Dr. Lettsom, two of whose sons were his pupils. Under this gentleman's direction he studied physic, and by his recommendation, having sometime before this become a member of the Society of Friends, he obtained from the late Mr. Barclay, an eminent Quaker, the appointment of guardian to his son. While his ward was pursuing his studies in the University of Leyden, Mr. Whitehead completed his own studies there, and returned to England with the diploma of Doctor of Medicine. Chiefly by the influence of the Friends, he obtained the appointment of physician to the London Dispensary. About 1788, he again offered himself to the Methodist Society, was kindly received by Wesley, and became a useful and respected local preacher in London.

had already printed or might afterwards print, unto Thomas Coke, LL.D., Alexander Mather, Peard Dickenson, John Valton, James Rogers, Joseph Taylor, and Adam Clarke, to the intent that they should apply all the profits of the said books, &c., unto the sole use and benefit of the Conference of the people called Methodists, as established by a Deed Poll under the hand and seal of the said John Wesley, bearing date the 28th day of February, 1784, and enrolled in His Majesty's High Court of Chancery." By this Deed the seven trustees therein named were requested and authorized, "with all convenient speed, to pay and discharge such debts as the said John Wesley should owe at the time of his death, out of the profits of the said books, &c.; and also to pay any legacies or annuities which he the said John Wesley should bequeath by will to any person or persons whatsoever."

The design of this Deed evidently was to secure, beyond a doubt, the proceeds of his property to the Connexion. It was at this time uncertain whether the Deed Poll would be sufficient to give such a legal constitution to the Conference, as would be admitted and recognised by the civil and ecclesiastical courts; and, in case of failure in this respect, his Will might not be sufficient to protect the property from the claims which might be made by the heirs-at-law. The absolute gift of the books, &c., to trustees was intended to prevent the possibility of such an occurrence. The bequests of the Will being recognised by the Deed, and the disposition of the residue of the property in both cases being the same, there was perfect harmony between the provisions of the two documents. As Dr. Coke was in America when Wesley died, all his manuscripts and letters were carefully sealed up, and delivered to the custody of James Rogers, the superintendent of the London

Circuit. An inventory was also taken of all his books and stock, for the benefit of the executors and legatees.

The executors went to Manchester during the sittings of this Conference, for the purpose of conferring with the preachers respecting the manner in which it would be most desirable for them to discharge the duties of their trust, and the debt of seventeen hundred pounds with which the property was encumbered.

By the Will, the stock and the copyright of those tracts which Wesley had published in the latter part of his life, were left in trust to the three executors, for the benefit of the general fund of the Conference. His earlier works had been published so long, that the copyright had expired. By a very express clause in the Will, the executors were excluded from all control over the printing department, which was confided to a Committee of preachers. The types, printing presses, &c., were also given, not to the executors, but to Thomas Rankin and George Whitfield, in trust, for the use of the Conference. These arrangements proved that it was the testator's desire that the general direction of the Book-room should remain with the Conference; the executors being charged only with the duty of seeing his debts and bequests paid, and then placing the residue of the stock and copyright at the disposal of the Conference for the benefit of the Connexion. This design was still more clearly shown by his subsequent "Deed," already mentioned. By this instrument, the stock and copyright of all the books and tracts which Wesley had published, or even might publish during the remainder of his life, were given to seven trustees, for the same purpose as that named in his Will, with this difference, that, whereas in the Will the profits were directed to be applied to the *carrying on the work of God by itinerant*

preachers,—a very general description, which would give great latitude in the application of the funds,—in the Deed it was expressly declared, that the profits should be applied to the above use, with this limitation, that it was to be "*according to the Deed of Declaration*, respecting the Conference, *which Mr. Wesley had filed in Chancery in the year* 1784."

The Conference, having fully considered the whole case, had no doubt that the printing, the distribution of the books, and the application of the profits, were designed by Wesley to continue under their direction. The seven trustees expressed their entire concurrence in this judgment, and declared themselves quite willing that this course should be pursued. The Conference then considered the best means of dealing with the debt of seventeen hundred pounds. And, regarding it as more honourable to the memory of their deceased friend, they determined to borrow the necessary sum, and pay off this debt immediately, and then to do their utmost to reduce the stock, for the purpose of discharging the loan, and thus to realize the proceeds of the bequest for the benefit of poor Circuits, according to the design of the testator.

Discussion between the Conference and the executors as to the management of the property.

The Conference next deliberated how they should act in respect of the executors of the Will; and considering them to be very respectable men, and that they, as well as the trustees under the Deed, had a right to be satisfied that the property to which they had administered should be used according to the design of the testator, it was proposed that the three executors should be incorporated with the preachers, in order that they might be present at the Conferences when the money should be disposed of; and that they should be members of the Committee in London for the regulation of the press and the examination of the

accounts. Both these proposals were adopted by the Conference unanimously.

The three executors were then introduced into the Conference, when the President informed them of the resolutions which the Conference had passed, adding, "We think this will be a safe and effectual way to fulfil the design of the testator." The executors, however, stated that, in their opinion, their authority was to be continued over the property, for the benefit of the Conference, as long as they should live, and therefore they could not comply with the proposal. The President replied, that certainly their authority could only extend to the property of which Wesley died possessed; and it could not extend to what might arise out of it by means of the preachers. The executors then promised to consider very fully what had been advanced, and to give their answer.

The next morning the three gentlemen handed in a paper containing the following statement: "Having maturely considered the situation in which we stand, as executors to Mr. Wesley, and trustees of his property, for the use of the Conference after payment of his debts and legacies, and being sworn in the Ecclesiastical Court faithfully to execute his Will, it is our opinion, that we cannot legally or conscientiously divest ourselves of the trust reposed in us, or extend its administration beyond the designs of the testator. We are fully sensible that the Conference have it in their power to render the property of small value; but we trust that they will not come to any resolution of that kind, as whatever it may produce will be solely at their disposal, and we wish to afford them every assistance and support in our power toward carrying on the work of God agreeably to Mr. Wesley's design." *

* Myles's "Chronological History of Methodism," p. 200.

When this paper was read, one of the preachers said, that he could not think Wesley designed that the executors should have the management of the property in this exclusive way, as he had executed a Deed which placed that authority in the hands of seven members of the Conference. To this, one of the executors immediately replied, "that they had taken advice respecting that Deed, and were informed that it was good for nothing; and that *any claim on that ground would be resisted.*" The president then informed the gentlemen that the preachers were determined to give up the whole property, if the executors persisted in their refusal of the *union* proposed to them by the Conference, as they were certain the testator's design could in no other way be fulfilled. Further time for consideration was desired by the executors, who the next morning sent in the following note: "To meet the wishes of the Conference, we are willing *wholly* to give up our trust to them, after discharging the debts and legacies, *provided we can do it legally.* In order, therefore, conscientiously to divest ourselves of the charge, we will without delay take the opinion of the king's advocate, and one other eminent doctor of the civil law, whether it can be done; and if so, what will be the proper mode to be adopted." The assumption made in this note, that the Conference wished to get rid of the trustees, was incorrect. The preachers were well aware that the bequest could only be rendered of considerable value through their continued exertions and influence. While, therefore, they were perfectly willing for the executors to have every means of rightly disposing of Wesley's bequest, they were determined not to give them control over the enhanced value which it could receive only from themselves. The Conference then carefully considered this proposal of the trustees: and being fully satisfied that

Wesley intended that the printing and the disposal of the books should be under their own direction; that the utmost the executors could reasonably require, was to see that the profits were disposed of agreeably to the intention of the testator; and that this would be secured by the *union* which had been recommended, whilst the exclusive management asked for by the executors was altogether impracticable; the Conference, resolved to relinquish their interest in the bequest entirely, rather than have the future action of their Book-room embarrassed by the interference of the executors.

The following reply to their note was therefore, the same day, sent to these gentlemen :—"The Conference beg leave to return the following answer to the executors of the late Rev. Mr. Wesley's Will, as containing their ultimate resolutions in respect of the business between them and the executors.

"I. They return the executors their sincere thanks for the trouble which they have taken in coming down from London to Manchester on the business of their office.

"II. They inform the executors that they resign all their claim and right to the whole stock of books and pamphlets of which Mr. Wesley was possessed at the time of his death, into the hands of them, the executors.

"III. They will purchase the above-mentioned stock of the executors, (if the executors please,) at any time between this and the first of September next, paying to the executors such a sum of money as will be sufficient to enable them to discharge every obligation which may lie upon them on account of Mr. Wesley's Will."

The effect of Wesley's testamentary Deed.

Thus ended this singular negotiation. The executors were upright, honest men, who, having been informed by some incompetent lawyer that the Deed executed by Wes-

ley was of no force, really believed themselves bound to exercise a complete and exclusive authority over the whole of the property which Wesley had bequeathed to the Conference; altogether overlooking the consideration that they could not possibly do this, without at the same time exercising entire control over property which would be constantly produced by the labours and influence of the preachers.

But these gentlemen were soon undeceived, and relieved from all their anxiety. On their return to London, they consulted the solicitor general, (afterwards Lord Eldon,) and the king's advocate, concerning the Will and the Deed. They were informed, *that the Deed was testamentary, and superseded the Will in respect to the books, copyright, &c.; being made subsequent to the Will.* They immediately informed the trustees of this decision; who without delay announced this important change in the aspect of the business to the Connexion, in a circular dated, "September 5th, 1791;" adding, in a postscript, "We have, since we printed the above, received the decision of the judge of the Prerogative Court, who has declared the Deed to be testamentary; but that the executors of the Will must first appear before the Court, and give up their probate; to which they have no objection."

The trustees took out letters of administration, and provided the executors with the means of discharging all their liabilities under the Will; and then the entire disposition of the property passed to the Conference, with whom the trustees were identified.

Difficulties respecting Dr. Whitehead's Life of Wesley.

This embarrassment removed, another soon arose. A short time after Wesley's death, a report was circulated that John Hampson, Jun., who had formerly been an itinerant preacher, was preparing a Life of the founder of Methodism.

As, from the *animus* under which Mr. Hampson had left the Methodists,* it could not be expected that he would produce a candid and unbiassed Life of Wesley, it was thought proper immediately to begin the compilation of a memoir of his life, character, and labours. The following notice was accordingly published throughout the Connexion :—"The executors of the late Rev. John Wesley think it necessary to caution his numerous friends and the public against receiving any spurious or hasty accounts of his life, as three gentlemen, to whom he has bequeathed his manuscripts and other valuable papers, will publish an authentic narrative as soon as it can be prepared for the press."

It was easier to make this announcement than to carry it strictly and literally into accomplishment. Of these "three gentlemen," two, Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, were fully engaged as itinerant preachers, and devoted to the labours of their sacred calling with much more than ordinary zeal. The latter felt the claims of the ministerial office press so religiously on his conscience, that every other matter was made to bend to this paramount obligation. He was now appointed superintendent of the Bristol Circuit,—a post which not only removed him from London, where all Wesley's papers and manuscripts were deposited, but involved him in the most arduous and onerous duties. Dr. Coke was no less absorbed in ministerial labours : he was appointed to visit the several missionary stations in the West Indies. The only gentleman remaining, to whom the "manuscripts and papers" of Wesley had been bequeathed, was Dr. Whitehead, a man of competent learning, resident in London, and a local preacher, who was much esteemed by all the parties, and in whom James Rogers had much

* See Vol. i., p. 498.

confidence. He was willing to undertake the task of writing a Life of Wesley, and was, all things considered, regarded as the most eligible person to undertake the important work. At Dr. Whitehead's earnest request, therefore, and with the consent of Coke and Moore, Rogers delivered to him the whole of Wesley's manuscripts and papers, that he might select what was needful for his work, "the whole to be afterwards examined." As it could not be expected that a professional man could devote himself gratuitously to the performance of such a work, Dr. Whitehead proposed to Mr. Rogers that he should have one hundred pounds for his trouble and loss of time. Mr. Rogers brought this proposal under the united consideration of the executors and Printing Committee, when it was determined to give the Doctor one hundred guineas, as being a more handsome sum.

It seems very strange that so important a step should have been taken immediately before the meeting of Conference, where the whole question was likely to be considered; but so it was. And when the subject of a Life of Wesley did come before that assembly, much exception was taken to Dr. Whitehead as the biographer, principally on account of his known versatility of disposition. Mr. Rogers, however, interposed; and so far satisfied the Conference, that it confirmed the agreement between the Committee and Dr. Whitehead, and, to facilitate his work, appointed him a member of the London Book Committee. In making these arrangements, however, the Conference distinctly stipulated that Mr. Moore, in person, should examine the whole of Wesley's papers,* before any of their contents were published.

Thus far, all appears to have been well-intentioned

* Mrs. Smith's "Life of H. Moore," p. 116.

and satisfactory, and probably would have continued so, but for the unhappy influence of small friends who told the Doctor that he ought not to regard his engagement respecting the Life of Wesley; "that the work would produce a great sum of money; that he might realize *two thousand pounds* by it; and that to be so employed for so small a sum as *one hundred* would be an act of injustice to himself and his family."* The doctor unfortunately listened to this advice, and fell into the temptation.

He accordingly soon afterward avowed, that he would write the Life of Wesley as an independent man; that the copyright should be solely his own; and that, if it should be printed at the office of the Conference, he would have half the clear profits. These, and other conditions, he named in a letter to Mr. Whitfield, the book-steward, September 7th, 1791. The Book Committee declined to accede to the Doctor's proposals, but, for the sake of peace, offered to double the remuneration agreed on; or, if this offer were declined, to appoint three of their Committee to confer with any equal number of Dr. Whitehead's friends, to "consider whether any other mode of accommodation, agreeable to both parties, can be struck out." The doctor replied, that what had passed between him and Mr. Rogers was "an accidental conversation, not an agreement." He bitterly reproached the Conference with having "driven the executors from office," with whom he had no doubt of having made a satisfactory arrangement. He declined the offer of two hundred guineas, but consented to appoint three friends to meet three of the Committee. These parties met; but one of Dr. Whitehead's friends having, *in limine*, insisted that he should have the copyright as the basis of any arrangement, the preachers immediately

* H. Moore's "Life of Wesley," preface, p. vii.

declined to agree to this demand, and the meeting at once broke up.

It is not improbable that Dr. Whitehead was correct in his supposition, that the executors would have been more manageable in treaty than the preachers. The former had no interest whatever in promoting the profits of the Book-room; while the latter, knowing that the letters and private papers which would impart essential value to the biography, had been bequeathed to two members of their body, in conjunction with the doctor, naturally objected to his making it a source of exclusive personal profit. This objection, therefore, instead of impugning the honour of the Conference, is a proof of its wisdom.

When the negotiation was broken off, the Committee of preachers, with two of the executors, considered the whole subject; and in the course of conversation, one of the latter observed, that they had formerly offered Dr. Whitehead half the profits of the work for two years, and that they believed he would now accept these terms. The preachers' Committee, determined to lose no opportunity of "preserving peace," renewed this offer, provided the work should be read by them in manuscript, and approved. Dr. Whitehead replied, that he would not submit his writings to any person whatever on such conditions. The Committee then adopted the only course open to them. As Dr. Whitehead finally determined to publish his Life of Wesley, without any connexion with the Book-room, the Committee requested the other two legatees of Wesley's manuscripts to prepare a Memoir, to be published at the Book-room, for the benefit of the Connexion. To this they generously consented; and in the spring of 1792, Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley was announced. The first edition, of ten thousand copies, sold in a short period. A second edition was

prepared and on sale before the ensuing Conference. It ought also to be stated, that Dr. Whitehead positively refused to give up the private papers which had been intrusted to his care, or to allow his co-trustees to examine them, although this was distinctly required by the Will. Such conduct was most reprehensible; for, taking his own statement, that the arrangement with Mr. Rogers was not an agreement, but an "accidental conversation," it sufficiently indicates the understanding on which the papers were committed to his care; and this understanding, as a man of honesty and honour, he was bound to respect. He, however, retained all the papers for several years.*

New proposals from Dr. Whitehead respecting the Life of Wesley.

At the next Conference, the Doctor presented new terms with respect to the publication of his Life of Wesley. They are propounded in eight articles, and are printed as part of an advertisement to his first volume. Although they greatly modified his original propositions, they contained elements which rendered them entirely inadmissible. It was first stipulated that Dr. Whitehead should retain what part of Wesley's private papers he pleased, for the purposes of his work. For, although he now consented for Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore to join him in an examination of these papers, only those which the trustees should *unanimously* think unfit for publication were to be destroyed, and of the residue Dr. Whitehead was to retain for the pur-

* On the appearance of Coke and Moore's "Life of Wesley," the "Analytical Review," after comparing it with Hampson's memoir published about Midsummer in the preceding year, condemned the writers of the former work as guilty of "plagiarism." To this charge the late Dr. Adam Clarke replied in the same periodical, January, 1793, contending that each party had alike borrowed from the printed Works of Wesley, and had an equal right to those sources of information and reference. This reply set the question for ever at rest.—MRS. SMITH'S "Life of Moore," p. 112.

pose of his work all that he pleased. So he was to have an absolute *veto* on what papers were to be published.

Then, although he now consented to read to a committee of preachers the hundred and twenty-eight pages already printed, and the manuscript, as it should be prepared, to persons appointed by the Conference, he still insisted on claiming the right to insert in it whatever he deemed proper. On these conditions, and provided that the book should never be published without his name, nor altered without his consent, he offered the Conference the copyright on their paying all the expenses of its preparation. He would then trust to the generosity of the Conference, as to what remuneration he should receive for the time and labour of preparation.

These inadmissible.

These terms were clearly inadmissible. The Conference could not recognise the right of Dr. Whitehead absolutely to dispose of Wesley's papers, when that right belonged as much to either of his co-trustees as to himself. Still less could they, as a religious body, consent to acquire the copyright, and to perpetuate unaltered a work, over the preparation of which they had not been allowed to exercise effective control, and which, for anything they knew to the contrary, might contain matter open to the most serious objection. If the Conference had any apprehension of this result when they declined to receive Dr. Whitehead's proposals, they found their fears amply justified when the book made its appearance. For Dr. Whitehead, although known to be a Dissenter in principle, assumed the language and sentiments of a High Churchman, and laboured to exalt Charles Wesley, at the expense of his brother and of the itinerant preachers. He was also particularly sarcastic and bitter when speaking of Wesley's giving a regular ministry, by ordination with the imposition of hands, to the Societies

in America, after the political independence of the States had been acknowledged by the mother country; although ordination from Wesley had a short time previously been the object of his own most earnest desire.*

Besides other considerations, the circumstances of the Conference as to a Life of Wesley had greatly changed. Coke and Moore's Life had reached a second edition, so that the wants of the Connexion had been met,—at least, as far as practicable, in the absence of Wesley's papers; and it might fairly be supposed that the publication of Dr. Whitehead's Memoir by himself alone would involve the Connexion in less hazard than if purchased and published by the Book-room.

We must now turn to a brief review of the progress of Wesleyan evangelical action during the year, as far as our limits and materials will allow.

Narrative of Methodist history resumed.

Most of those persons who had seen with wonder the rise and progress of Methodism, through the unexampled labours of Wesley and his early coadjutors, fully believed, and boldly predicted, that with the death of its Founder it would crumble into ruins, and disappear. Many good

* He had, indeed, actually applied to Wesley, through Henry Moore, to be received as a preacher, to be ordained, and to be appointed a superintendent; and engaged, if he could be thus favoured, to resign the dispensary and his medical practice, and to come into the work as at the beginning. Mr. Moore presented the doctor's request to Wesley, and urged it by his own. But, on receiving a reply to his letter, he found every other part of it minutely answered, while this request was unnoticed. Mr. Moore wrote again, and strongly repeated the same request, and with precisely the same result. Mr. Moore adds, "The doctor's disappointment was extreme. Mr. Wesley loved the man; but he knew his versatility, and would not trust him again with so important an office."—MOORE's "Life of Wesley," Preface, p. ix.

men shared these apprehensions. The prospect of divisions of opinion, of jarring interests, of conflicting plans and purposes, was so clear, that the worst apprehensions seem to have been justified. Nor were such prognostications mistaken. Every expectation of contention and strife was amply verified; yet Methodism was not destroyed. The Societies were neither broken up, nor divided into separate sects. Notwithstanding all the untoward and harassing circumstances which occurred, the Connexion continued to prosper and increase.

Cause of Methodist progress under such unfavourable circumstances.

As the men of that day marvelled at this strange result, so we may fairly inquire into the real cause which produced it. This will be found in the fact, that Methodism was then not exclusively, nor indeed principally, that which observers saw, and heard, and speculated on. It did not mainly consist in any perfect agreement in the opinions or proceedings of eminent and influential ministers, in the unanimity of action among the wealthy and energetic laymen, or even in harmony of judgment among the members generally respecting religious rites or matters of discipline. No; in the absence of all this, and when to the eye of an external observer Methodism, as an ecclesiastical system, appeared an unfinished, inharmonious mass, without symmetry or cohesion,—something between a fragment and a ruin,—it contained, nevertheless, an inner structure, not obvious to those without, but which really constituted the massive framework of the building; and this was united, harmonious, and steady in its development and increase.

Beneath all the jars and collisions of sentiment and action by which Methodism was then distracted and distressed, the work of God in the conversion and edification of souls was carried on with diligence and godly zeal. The men who entertained and acted on conflicting

views respecting the administration of sacraments or disciplinary authority, retired from the arena where they had urged their individual opinions, to their closets for a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit, and then went to the pulpit, the Class, or the Prayer-meeting, intent on saving themselves, and those who heard them. This was the grand conservative principle of Methodism. Here was the secret of its vitality, power, and growth, under circumstances which would have destroyed any mere ecclesiastical or political organization.

Few proofs and illustrations of this inward life in the Methodism of this period have been preserved to our day: but these are much more than we shall be able to insert.

Mr. Benson's character and usefulness.

No man took a deeper interest or held stronger opinions on the questions which then agitated the Connexion than Joseph Benson. At the time of Wesley's death, he was superintendent of the Birmingham Circuit. Here, in addition to his personal duties as a preacher, and as a scriptural "overseer" over the interests of an important and densely populated country, he had, as a citizen, to sustain his position of anxiety and alarm in those popular outrages, provoked, indeed, most unwarrantably by English gentlemen dining in commemoration of the French Revolution, but still more unwarrantably issuing in the temporary suspension of all legitimate authority, and in the destruction of much private property. He had also to assert the truth of Christ's Gospel against the insidious and fatal errors so industriously circulated by the learning, talents, and energy of Dr. Priestley. This duty he discharged with great ability. All the erudite sophistries of that able writer were fully met; he was followed into the deepest recesses of philosophy, or the most profound subtleties

of metaphysics, and everywhere the truth of God was shown to be paramount over the vain imaginations of man.

But it was as a minister of Christ that Mr. Benson was emphatically at home. On the first day of 1792, he wrote, "My soul was much drawn out in prayer in the morning at Cherry Street, as also at Coleshill Street in the afternoon, and the people were much affected and comforted. In the evening, the Society met for renewing their covenant with God. Two persons appear to have received much divine consolation." And again, having preached four times in one day, he observes, "O that I may be able to do my duty to this people, and to watch over their souls, as one that must give account!" "St. Chrysostom," he adds, "it seems, never read Heb. xiii. 20, 21, without trembling, conscious of the great charge intrusted with him; and yet he was a most zealous preacher and faithful pastor. O how much more reason have I to tremble! Lord, impress more deeply upon my mind the importance of the care of souls!" *

Mr. Bramwell at Dewsbury.

The ruin occasioned by the defection at Dewsbury † had now been so far repaired, that, at the Conference of 1791, the town was again made the head of a Circuit, and placed under the superintendency of William Bramwell. Although a considerable improvement had taken place, the state of the people was very cheerless to the ardent spirit of this holy man. In a letter to a friend, he says, "I could not find a person who experienced entire sanctification, and but very few who were clear in pardon.

* Mr. Benson was appointed by the Conference of 1791 to Manchester, and Mr. Bradburn was removed from Manchester to Birmingham. But, in consequence of a mutual arrangement, the change did not take place until the 17th of May, 1792.—MACDONALD'S "Life of Benson," pp. 232–234.

† See Vol. i., p. 562.

The Societies in some places are increased, but active religion scarcely appeared." He mourned over the scene. Some remains of the late bitter wrangling still continued, but with these he would have nothing to do. The cure, he maintained, was not in external appliances, but in a revival of the work of God; of which there appeared neither sign nor hope. Bramwell knew where his strength lay, and, whilst he laboured most intensely, he ceased not to cry mightily to God for the promised effusion of His Holy Spirit. "For some time no reply was vouchsafed; no symptoms of the expected 'rain' appeared. From day to day he went up, like the messenger of Elijah, to the top of his spiritual Carmel, and looked toward the sea for the cloud which was to bring the blessing; but 'there was nothing.' Months rolled away,—there was no token of a change. A year passed,—a year he described as one of 'hard labour and much grief,'—and still there was no sound of coming rain. The horizon was yet as cloudless and unpromising as before." * But, though no change was seen sufficient to cheer the spirit of Bramwell, others perceived indications of positive improvement. During the spring of 1792, Mr. Entwisle spent a Sabbath at Dewsbury, and wrote in his journal: "I rejoice to find a considerable increase of the power of godliness in this neighbourhood, through the labours of Mr. Bramwell." †

Yet while good men were labouring in different parts of the country, breaking up the fallow ground, and casting in the precious seed of Gospel truth, others persisted in attaching so much importance to circumstantials, that they marred their work, and to a great extent rendered their

* "Life of Bramwell. By Members of his Family," p. 39.

† "Life of Entwisle," p. 77.

labours fruitless. Not content with pursuing his ordinary course of duty as a Methodist preacher, the great and good John Pawson persisted in introducing preaching at Halifax in church hours, and not merely administered the Lord's Supper in the chapel, but preached in gown and bands. This greatly grieved many, and left a rankling influence in the minds of some, which produced mischievous results several years afterward.

Intolerance defeated at Southampton.

One of the numerous cases furnished by history of mean persecuting acts recoiling upon their perpetrators, occurred this year at Southampton. The Methodists of that town rented what had been a large auction-room, as their place of worship. A Roman Catholic lady offered to rent the adjoining dwelling-house; but on learning to what purpose this room was applied, she refused to take the house, unless she could have the room also; and offered to take the whole on lease for twenty years. The landlord, thinking this offer too good to be refused, gave the Methodists notice to quit, and let the premises to the lady. For some time this caused the Society great embarrassment; until a bricklayer, who lived on the opposite side of the street, offered to fit up a large loft, in which he stored his scaffolding, for their use, on the same terms as they had held their former room. The offer was gladly accepted; and the loft, more commodious than the auction-room, made a better place of worship. The lady who had expelled them, as she supposed, from the neighbourhood, found that she had them in more disagreeable proximity than ever. They were now immediately before her eyes; and, worse still, the windows of the new place of worship completely overlooked her drawing-room. But she had signed the lease, and could not escape from the consequences of her con-

duct. She, indeed, endeavoured to prejudice the bricklayer against his new tenants; but the honest man replied, "My word is my bond: they shall have it."

The contributions of the Societies for the maintenance of the preachers and the general purposes of the Circuits were very small during these early times. The Portsmouth Circuit, for instance, with four hundred and eighty members, only raised £16. 3*s.* per quarter.*

Methodist progress in Ireland.

Before closing our record of this Methodistic year, we will add a short account of the fruit of its ministrations in a country part of Ireland. A young man, named Matthew Lanktree, while on a visit to some Christian friends, was brought to a saving acquaintance with the Gospel salvation. In the morning service, while a Methodist preacher dwelt on "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," his heart was softened into tenderness by manifestations of the Saviour's dying love. Whilst receiving the Lord's Supper in the church, he more fully realized "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "At the evening prayer-meeting," he says, "my soul overflowed with love to my adorable Redeemer, in whom I could now 'rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Having thus obtained mercy, it became my earnest prayer, that my 'kinsfolk and neighbours' might be made acquainted with the same salvation. I wrote to them immediately, and hastened home to explain 'the great things the Lord had done for me.' The desire of my heart was granted in the following manner:—Mr. William Wilson, one of the travelling preachers, felt his mind strangely drawn towards my native place, and accordingly

* This amount was made up by the contributions from Portsmouth, £7. 10*s.*; Crowdhill, 10*s.* 6*d.*; Timsbury, 15*s.* 6*d.*; Winchester, £1. 10*s.*; Southampton, £1. 1*s.*; Whitchurch, £1. 1*s.*; Newport, £3.; country places, £1. This sum remained without alteration throughout the year, from the Conference of 1791 to that of 1792.

came there, and was entertained by my friends at the same time that my letter reached them: his preaching made a deep impression on their minds. When I returned, they were full of concern, and appeared as a people prepared for the Lord. The following day Mr. Wilson returned. His appearance and manner evinced the man of God. His apparel was very plain; he was sweetly serious, apt to teach, and devoted to prayer. He preached on Saturday evening and Sabbath morning, after which he proposed forming a Society. About twenty persons gave in their names on the occasion, the majority of them my near and dear relations. The most serious part of this interesting transaction was, the injunction which Mr. Wilson laid on me, that I should take the charge of watching over them in the Lord. I knew not what to do. I dared not refuse, lest I should grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whose agency was so apparent in this strange work; but when the preacher departed, and left me to reflect on all that had occurred to myself and my people within the space of three weeks, I was filled with astonishment, and humbled in the dust; but the love of Christ constrained me, and the readiness of mind discovered by my friends to embrace the Gospel greatly contributed to my encouragement." *

Nor were these blossoms of spiritual hope blasted. The good work continued to grow; and the young man who, in the absence of other more mature agency, was so hastily put in charge of a Class, lived to train it up in the ways of God for about two years, and for nearly fifty-five years afterwards was an able minister of the Gospel.

Dr. Coke's Mission labours.

Dr. Coke was in America when he heard of the death of Wesley. This was his fourth visit to that country, and his third to the West Indies, in the space of seven years.

* LANKTREE'S "Biographical Narrative," p. 12.

On his first visit to these islands, in 1785, he spent about six weeks in Antigua, Dominica, St. Vincent's, St. Christopher's, and St. Eustatius, and then sailed to Charlestown, where he arrived on the 10th of February 1787. He then travelled through the country, preaching as frequently as possible; and, in conjunction with Mr. Asbury, held three Conferences. He embarked at Philadelphia, for his homeward voyage, on the 27th of May, and reached Dublin on June the 25th. Toward the end of the following year, he again crossed the Atlantic, visiting St. Vincent's, Dominica, Antigua, St. Kitt's, St. Eustatius, Jamaica, and again passed over to Charlestown on the continent. Here he pursued his usual course of preaching, travelling, and holding Conferences in conjunction with Mr. Asbury, witnessing everywhere the prosperity of the work of God. On the 7th of June, he sailed from New York, and reached England about the middle of July. On the 28th of November, 1790, he again left this country, made another tour of the West India Islands, and was pursuing his journey through the States, when, at Port Royal in Virginia, he heard of the death of Wesley, and hastened home.

The Conference of 1792 was held in London, and began July the 21st. Alexander Mather was elected president, and Dr. Coke secretary. The number of Circuits in Great Britain and Ireland was increased from one hundred and fifteen to one hundred and twenty-one. The number of members in Great Britain and Ireland showed an increase of one thousand six hundred and fifty-six, and in British America and the West Indies of one thousand and ninety-nine. Such was the demand for ministers that the "list of reserve" contained the name of only one preacher. The Conference of 1792.

Among the twenty-five probationers now received into

full Connexion, is the name of John Hickling. Only one minister desisted from travelling: and twenty-nine young men, including John Stephens, James Buckley, and Richard Treffry, were received on trial. Only three deaths occurred during the year:—JOHN RICHARDSON, one of the clerical staff at City Road chapel. He exercised his ministry twenty-nine years among the London Societies and congregations; a man of simple manners, uniform life, and meek spirit. His preaching was full of holy unction; and after suffering from a severe asthma for twenty-six years, he yielded up his spirit, gently whispering, "God is always with me;"—ROBERT EMPRINGHAM, "a faithful old labourer in the vineyard of his Lord;"—and THOMAS WORRELL, a native of Ireland, who laboured there for some time, and then devoted himself to the work of God among the heathen. He was a young man of more than ordinary promise, and "died the death of a saint" in the island of Jamaica.

At this Conference the question of administering the sacrament was decided for one year by lot; a manner of proceeding to which many of the preachers were greatly opposed, although the difficulties connected with the question, and the violent contention which they occasioned, induced them to submit for the sake of peace. The following regulations were also enacted:—That no preacher shall receive any allowance from the Circuit on account of his children, after they have arrived at the age of seventeen:—That "no ordination shall take place in the Methodist Connexion without the consent of the Conference first obtained;" and "if any brother break the above-mentioned rule by ordaining, or being ordained, he thereby excludes himself."

The freedom of expression in speech and writing, induced

by the promulgation of republican principles in France, led the Conference to place the following rules on their Minutes:—"None of us shall, either in writing or conversation, speak lightly or irreverently of the government under which he lives. We are to observe, that the oracles of God command us to be subject to the higher powers, and that honour to the king is there connected with the fear of God."

It was also resolved that service in church hours should not be introduced in any new place without the consent of the Conference. A minute was made, prohibiting the use of harsh and offensive expressions in controversy. Other miscellaneous resolutions were passed; and finally the following important question was considered:—"What shall we do more to promote the work of God? *A.* We do at this solemn hour of the night (nearly midnight) devote ourselves to the service of Almighty God, in a more unreserved and entire manner than ever we have hitherto done, and are all determined to spend and be spent in the blessed work. And this our solemn dedication of ourselves to God we do unanimously signify by rising from our seats in the presence of the Lord."* The venerable John Valton wrote of this season:—"The last night, between nine and ten o'clock, we were in great confusion and uncertainty how to act towards the disaffected trustees. We went to prayer, calling upon God to appear in our behalf. The Lord answered us in rich mercy. The affair was settled, and love possessed every breast. A day of thanksgiving was appointed, and we all stood up to testify our determination to give ourselves more fully than ever to God. Having done this, we sang, 'Praise God,' &c., and went to prayer, and parted in the utmost love and harmony."†

* Minutes, vol. i., p. 262. † "Wesleyan Magazine," 1845, p. 217, *note*.

Dr. Coke attempts a Mission to France.

The Revolution in France having abolished the persecuting laws formerly in force, and given perfect freedom of worship to all denominations, Dr. Coke, ever intent on missionary enterprise, felt anxious to introduce Methodist preaching into that country. A letter had fallen into his hands, written from Paris to Lady Huntingdon, before her death, earnestly requesting her to send a preacher to the French metropolis, as there was a prospect of great good. The doctor went to Paris, taking with him Mr. De Queteville from Jersey. At first matters seemed so cheering, that Dr. Coke actually purchased a church, capable of containing two thousand persons, for the small sum of £120. While the arrangements for this purpose were being made, he hired a commodious room in a frequented thoroughfare, and publicly announced a time for holding divine service. Mr. De Queteville (whose native language was French, as spoken in the Channel Islands) preached. They were, however, greatly mortified to find that only thirty-six persons could be induced to enter the house. At the close of this service, it was published that on the ensuing day "Dr. Coke, an English divine, would read to them a sermon of his own composition in the French tongue." On this occasion the congregation consisted of six persons. Further inquiry convinced them of the hopeless character of the attempt. Dr. Coke obtained permission to withdraw from the treaty for the purchase of the church, and returned to England.

Dr. Coke again visits America and the West Indies.

Foiled in his efforts to be useful in France, the Doctor again visited the islands of the sea, and the Methodist brethren in America. Sailing from Gravesend on September 1st, he reached Newcastle, in Delaware, on the 30th of October; and arrived in Baltimore in time to take part in the General Conference, which began in that city on the 1st

of September. This assembly continued fifteen days, and he observes respecting it, "I had always entertained very high ideas of the piety and zeal of the American preachers, and of the considerable abilities of many: but I had no expectation, I confess, that the debates would be carried on in so very masterly a manner." It was on this occasion determined that the next General Conference should be held in 1796, and that, in the mean time, the Districts should respectively hold Annual Conferences. The Doctor then visited Cokesbury College, and expressed himself highly satisfied with its state and character. Having accomplished his object in America, he sailed from New York, and reached St. Eustatius on the 31st of December. This island belonged to the Dutch West India Company, and was governed by a brutal tyrant named Reynolds. Dr. Coke says, "He received us with his usual acrimony, and seemed and spoke as if he was determined to pull down the work of God." All preaching was forbidden; there was no minister on the island; meetings for prayer and Christian fellowship were prohibited; and men, and even women, who broke through these persecuting rules, and met in small companies to pray to God, were cruelly stripped and flogged with the cart-whip by the common executioner. The result was, that a lovely Society of above five hundred members was dispersed, and only about half-a-dozen small Classes, meeting by stealth, were known to exist.

Violent persecution.

Leaving this scene with loathing, Dr. Coke sailed to St. Kitt's; where he was informed by the missionary, Mr. Warrener, that a fearful persecution had broken out at St. Vincent's, and that Mr. Lumb, the missionary to that island, was in the common prison. The Doctor immediately proceeded thither. The passage-boat touched at Dominica, where he learned that Mr. M'Cormack, who had been sent

to that island as a missionary in 1791, died after a few months' labour, but had, even in that short period, been eminently successful. About one hundred and fifty souls were awakened under his ministry; but these had been partially scattered, as no minister had since visited them. Dr. Coke got as many of them together as could be suddenly collected, and, not having time to preach, prayed with them, and encouraged them to persevere. On the 6th of January he reached St. Vincent's, and hastened to the gaol to visit his imprisoned brother. He learned that the authorities of the island had prohibited preaching to the Negro slaves without a licence, except by the rectors of parishes. The punishment for the first offence was a small fine or imprisonment for not less than thirty, nor more than ninety, days; for the second offence, such corporeal punishment as the court should adjudge, with banishment from the island. A return to the island, after banishment, exposed the offender to death. In connexion with this law it was enacted, that no licence to preach should be given to any one who had not resided one year on the island;—a proof that it was directed against the itinerant plan of Methodism. Mr. Lumb bravely dared to disobey this unchristian statute. Knowing it had passed, he went to the Methodist chapel, preached, as usual, to all the Negroes, and was consequently shut up in prison. Dr. Coke could only offer his friend the consolations of religion, and hope that his Majesty in council would disallow this persecuting measure,—a hope afterward fully realized.

From St. Vincent's the Doctor went to Grenada, to introduce Mr. Bishop, a newly appointed missionary from the Norman isles, to his sphere of labour. Here Dr. Coke records a fine instance of self-sacrifice in a Methodist missionary. Mr. Thomas Owens, who had been on the island

the preceding year, had so commended himself to the favour of the governor, that he offered him the living of an adjacent island, worth £400 *per annum*, with surplice fees of nearly an equal amount, if he would go to England, under his recommendation, for ordination by the Bishop of London. Mr. Owens refused the flattering offer, and lived and died a Methodist preacher.

After staying in Grenada a week, Dr. Coke proceeded to St. Kitt's, where he was kindly received. He spent a happy Sabbath, and observes, "Religion flourishes like an olive tree in the house of God." From St. Kitt's he sailed to Tortola. Here Mr. Owens, by his judicious management, had averted a warm persecution, and was preaching with great success, having fourteen hundred awakened Negroes under his care. Dr. Coke thence sailed to Antigua, where the District Meeting was held, which continued five days, and was very satisfactory. He then made a brief visit to Barbadoes, passed on to Jamaica, and returned to England.

Revival at Dewsbury.

Returning to a consideration of the home work of Methodism, it will be remembered that we left William Bramwell, on the eve of the last Conference, labouring to promote a revival of the work of God at Dewsbury, with some indications of good attending his ministrations, but nothing that he would call prosperity. After the Conference, on entering upon his course of duty for another year, these labours were renewed and extended. He exerted himself to excite in the people the same ardent desire for the prosperity of Zion which absorbed his own soul. He appointed prayer-meetings at five o'clock in the morning; and many joined at this early hour to pray for the desired Pentecost. He had an influential coadjutor in the

pious and zealous Ann Cutler, whose devotedness had earned for her the appellation of "*praying Nanny.*" So early as four o'clock in the morning, this ardent woman would be on her knees, earnestly beseeching God to pour His Spirit upon His church. In another chamber not far off, the deeper tones of the minister might be heard, urging the same request. Such persevering prayer was not likely to remain unanswered. While Ann Cutler was engaged in prayer, one person received the blessing of perfect love; afterward, at a prayer-meeting, two others found peace with God. Then came a glorious revival; a hundred persons were added to the Dewsbury Society in one quarter, and many of the former members were greatly quickened and blessed in their religious course. Other parts of the Circuit shared these showers of blessings, and people flocked from every part of the surrounding country to partake of these refreshing influences. The love-feasts were crowded with persons anxious to tell what God had done for their souls.

Bramwell's physical strength and endurance were as remarkable as the fervour of his piety, and the vigour of his faith. The Rev. John Kershaw, who spent some months under his roof during this year, says:—"I once accompanied Mr. Bramwell from Dewsbury to Wakefield in the afternoon, for the purpose of assisting the Rev. Richard Reece in holding a Watch-night. Mr. Bramwell preached: we continued the service, as usual on these occasions, until the new year was ushered in. After taking some refreshment, we rode home six miles: it was more than two o'clock when we retired to rest. The next morning (Sabbath) he was in his closet at half-past four o'clock,—near his usual hour,—pouring out strong cries and tears to God. We breakfasted at our

accustomed time, seven o'clock. He walked about two miles, or two miles and a half, to preach at nine, and afterwards renewed the tickets of a pretty large Class. From that place he walked about three miles further, dined, preached, met two or three Classes, and preached again. Afterwards he travelled upwards of two miles more on foot, and preached a fourth sermon. This done, he returned home, walking five miles back. He then sat down to supper, ate his meat with gladness and singleness of heart, and with cheerfulness also. Having finished his repast, he rose from his seat, exclaiming, 'Brother Kershaw, I could do it all over again. I am almost as fresh as I was in the morning.' The next day he was in his closet at his usual hour, four o'clock."*

Unfavourable state of the country.

The state of the country, indeed, was such as to lead zealous ministers to put forth uncommon exertions. We can scarcely conceive any evil influence which did not more or less affect the English people. The progress of republicanism in France gave an immense impulse to low, loose, levelling political sentiments, which fearfully corrupted the middle and lower classes. The same cause produced a correspondent revulsion in the extreme adherents of what was called "the Church and State" party. With many of these, the support of the government, irrespective of abuses or defects, was patriotism; while attachment to the Church, without regard to its spirit and object, was deemed religion. The infidel writings of Paine and his coadjutors deluged the land with blasphemy and ribaldry. His trial and conviction for libellous language published in his "Rights of Man," which took place this year, gave increased currency and potency to his irreligious opinions. In addition to all this, the

* "Memoir of William Bramwell," p. 41.

country was afflicted with a mania of speculation. The exciting cause was canal shares. On one day nineteen notices appeared in the "Gazette" of intended applications to Parliament respecting internal navigation; while the premium given for shares in companies which had obtained parliamentary sanction, reached a fabulous amount. The shares of the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal reached a premium of £1,170; the Stourbridge, £350; and others a corresponding amount. Again, the country, but especially the metropolis, swarmed with French refugees, most of whom were in a state of abject distress.

All these, and many minor causes, operated unfavourably on the religion of the country; and those who were really in earnest to promote the spread of the Gospel, had to labour "in season and out of season." Their efforts were not unfrequently accompanied by special divine blessing. Even when much apparent fruit was not realized, God was present in His sanctuary, and the holy unction was felt. Mr. Benson has numerous entries in his journal similar to the following:—"On the morning of May 22nd, I preached at Oldham: the Lord was present with us, and many were refreshed." Having afterwards preached at Rochdale and Todmorden, he adds, "The Lord refreshed me with His presence." "This day I have gone quite beyond my strength, having preached not only four times, but very long every time. However, I hope good has been done. The congregations have been large, attentive, and affected."

Mr. Benson's defence of the Methodist preachers.

This eminent minister had not only to exert himself to the full measure of his strength, and sometimes to go beyond it, in the regular work of his Circuit, but also to repel attacks made on the Methodist ministry by men of elevated station in the Church. The Rev. Edward

Tatham, D.D., rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, preached a sermon, which was afterward published, in four of the churches of that city. It was directed against the Dissenters generally, but mainly against the Methodists. Dr. Tatham's principal object was to show that sound learning, and honesty of purpose, or, as he expressed it, "ability of head, and integrity of heart," were the prime qualifications for the Christian ministry; and that the right of private judgment, the privilege and boast of Protestants, mainly consists in the choice of such men for ministers. Mr. Benson replied to this discourse, in five letters, which were published in the spring of 1793, and reached a third edition before the end of the year. In opposition to the Doctor's leading principle, the author contended that the truth and importance of the doctrines taught are of more consequence to the hearer than the degree of ability, or even integrity, possessed by the teacher. "What avails it to me, Reverend Sir," he asks, "what a man's abilities may be as a teacher, or what his integrity, if, on the one hand, he be deceived himself, and of course deceive me by teaching what is false; or, on the other, merely amuse me by teaching what is unimportant?"

It naturally fell within Dr. Tatham's plan, to place the Methodist preachers, as self-taught men, in disadvantageous comparison, in learning, with clergymen of the Establishment. To this part of the discourse Mr. Benson replied:—"Above twenty years ago I entered at Oxford, in hopes of perfecting my education in the languages and sciences. And as this was soon after the Doctors and Masters, in full Convocation, a general search having been made, had expelled from the University all that were judged deficient in capacity and learning; had I not reason to

believe I was become a member of a very learned body? But how great were my astonishment and mortification, when, waiting upon my tutor, Mr. B——, to know in what books he would give me lectures, I was given to understand that the gentlemen under his care read (some of them were in orders) *Cornelius Nepos*, and the *Greek Testament*, and that I must go through these books with them! After attending a few times at the hours appointed, unable any longer to brook so much loss of time, I made bold to intimate that these books, and most of the Latin and Greek classics, were very familiar to me, as I had taught them at a grammar school near Bristol. He then informed me, that he would excuse my attending; but, as none of the other gentlemen under his care were capable of reading any other books, he could not conveniently give me lectures in any other books. I was, therefore, obliged, though at the University, to be, what you call, 'self-taught;' for I did not receive the smallest assistance from any, save that I attended public lectures in divinity, read by the Regius Professor at Christchurch, and went through a course of lectures on experimental philosophy."

It is not intended by this quotation to underrate the advantages of a collegiate education, or to insinuate that Oxford is now what it was then. But, as there are persons still fond of depreciating the preachers of that day as ignorant and unlearned, it is only simple justice to show, as the above extract clearly does, what was the amount of classical learning generally acquired in the first of the English Universities at that time, and to assert the well-known fact, that some, at least, of the Methodist preachers, contemporary with Benson, who had none of his early advantages, by persevering industry and application acquired

a respectable knowledge of the Scriptures in their original languages.

The following extract from a letter written by Mr. Brackenbury to Jasper Winscom, dated, "Isle of Portland, April 16th, 1793," shows how Methodism was advancing in the remote parts of the south of England:—"Mr. Smith, my colleague, is now at Poole, and through the blessing of God we have gathered upwards of twenty souls there, who meet in Society. There is also a pleasing prospect of many more. We have likewise made a beginning at Ringwood. I preached there about two months ago, and Mr. Smith has been over since, but was very ill used by a Squire Mowbray, a justice of the peace, before whom five persons were summoned to appear for disturbing the meeting. The justice defended the delinquents, and threw the expense on Mr. Smith, though the evidence was incontestably on his side. But what will not wicked magistrates do, when under the malignant influence of prejudice and passion? I think I never heard of an act of more palpable injustice in all my life.....Through the divine goodness, the work advances in this Isle. We have near fifty members in Society, besides the children, who amount to near thirty more; and several of them have found peace with God."

The Conference of 1793 was held at Leeds, and commenced on Monday, July 29th. John Pawson was elected president, and Dr. Coke secretary. In reference to the Presidency Dr. Clarke observes, "Pawson is the very best President we have had.....He preached, last evening, a sermon which seemed just to have dropped out of heaven."* This Conference seems, also, to

The Conference of 1793.

* Manuscript letter.

have been unusually harmonious and happy. "Since we were a people," says Dr. Clarke, "we never had such a Conference. Heaven and earth have been united, harmony and unity alone have prevailed. Our business has met with unusual dispatch. The particulars relative to the sacramental question have been adjusted in the most excellent way that I believe could have been devised to meet the wishes of all parties." * The Circuits were increased from one hundred and thirty-one to one hundred and forty-one.

Thirty-one ministers were taken into full connexion, among whom we recognise John Kershaw, Robert Lomas, and Miles Martindale. Twenty-five candidates were admitted on trial, including George Marsden, who subsequently became president of the Conference; and four desisted from travelling. The obituary includes seven names:—James Wray, who died in the West Indies, in all the resignation, peace, and holy joy, "that might be expected from a father in Christ:"—Thomas Robinson, "a steady, pious man, who was cut off in the prime of life, and died uncommonly happy in God:"—John Shaw, who was "useful in every Circuit during his thirty years of service:"—Thomas Tennant, a man of a meek and quiet spirit, always acceptable as a preacher, and who suffered much "from a deep nervous disorder:"—Richard Watkinson, "an old labourer, who, for several months before his death, drank deep into the Spiri of God:"—Andrew Blair, of "sound understanding, deep piety, and great zeal:"—and Joseph Cownley, who, as the son of parents neither indigent nor affluent, received an education suited to his expected position. His youth was "pleasant and lovely," unstained by profanity, and unclouded by sinful

* Everett's "Adam Clarke," vol. i., p. 334.

or even questionable amusements. The "prevenient grace," so richly vouchsafed, led to early seriousness. Under the preaching of Wesley and his helpers, he learnt the way of salvation. His employment, as travelling secretary of a justice of the peace, afforded him a genteel maintenance, but it exposed him to much that was distasteful; and he, therefore, returned to Leominster, his native place, where among "a little society," formed by one of Whitefield's preachers, he soon began to preach.

In 1746, Wesley sent for him to Bristol, and inducted him into the ministerial office. The mode of admission was simple and impressive. The young man knelt down; Wesley put into his hands the New Testament, saying, "Take thou authority to preach the Gospel;" gave him his benediction, earnestly invoked the divine blessing, and sent him forth upon a career which he worthily pursued for half a century. With a voice strong, soft, and harmonious; a pathos melting and insinuating as the morning dew; a godly ambition to be "useful, rather than popular;" discourses well studied, argumentative, and powerful in appeal, he was at once "a son of thunder," and a "son of consolation." Wesley pronounced him "one of the best preachers in England." In Staffordshire, where clergy, magistrates, and mobs, "a three-fold cord," linked themselves in unholy alliance to "stop the progress of superstition and enthusiasm;" and at Cork, where the infamous Butler and his associates attacked Methodist congregations "with stones, clubs, and swords," he endured his full share of persecution.

After travelling some years, a distressing headache,—the result of a severe fever,—unfitting him for the toils of regular Circuit work, he resided chiefly in Newcastle. After preaching thousands of sermons in the Old Orphan House,

he had "always something new." He was grave, "yet was easy, familiar, pleasant, and sometimes *a little facetious in conversation.*" Calm and kindly, he seldom ruffled the temper of others. He was the cherished friend and correspondent of the Wesleys and Whitefield, who pressed him to supply his Tabernacle in London "for a month or two." On September 23rd, 1792, he closed his labours of nearly half a century, with a sermon on, "Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord;" and was soon summoned to his rest. "The blood of our Redeemer is precious in our dying moments," said a friend. "O precious! O precious! what should I do but for that?" was his gasping reply. "The fear of death, Sir, has long since been removed." "I am not afraid to die; but I am afraid lest I should become impatient under affliction." "Jesus, I am thine; if it be Thy will, and I have finished the work Thou hast committed to me, then take me to Thyself." "I feel such love in my heart, that if I were carried to the chapel, I could sit and preach to the people." "Attended by the singers, and a number of friends, his remains were carried to the Ballast Hills; where," says John Gaulter, "amidst tears and sighs, I committed him to the dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection unto eternal life."

The most important subjects deliberated on at this Conference have been fully considered in foregoing chapters. Besides these, various salutary arrangements were made, such as disallowing the division of Circuits, except with the consent of the District Meeting and other authorities; referring all business relating to chapels, preachers' houses, &c., to the District Meetings, before they could be entertained by the Conference.

One resolution of this session indicates a striking departure from the views and practices of Wesley: "The

distinction between ordained and unordained preachers shall be dropped." The Conference had good reason for this step. Being obliged to concede sacraments to Societies which unanimously desired them from their own preachers, no alternative was left but formally ordaining all the preachers in full Connexion; or regarding the reception of a preacher into the full work of the ministry at the end of his probation as equivalent to real or formal ordination. The latter, decidedly the more reasonable and scriptural view, was adopted. And in the position then occupied by the Conference, it could be taken with propriety and consistency, although such a recognition could scarcely be expected from Wesley, considering his strong ecclesiastical opinions, and the position which he always regarded his preachers as occupying.

Little as was effected towards settling the controversy respecting the sacraments, enough was done to exercise a mighty influence on the spiritual condition of the Connexion. In very many respects, the persons taking opposite sides in this struggle were equally entitled to the affectionate consideration and forbearance of the Conference. But it cannot be denied, that in one aspect they stand on very different ground. The men who, adhering to Wesley's original views, contended that Methodists should go to their parish churches to receive the sacraments, were clearly contending for a long cherished and conscientiously held opinion, and nothing more. This was not the case with great numbers who desired to receive the sacraments from their own preachers. They felt the requirements of the word of God pressing on their consciences. They could not comfortably communicate with ungodly, worldly, or persecuting men; and they experienced

a religious want of the sacred ordinance. This difference in the circumstances of the parties explains why the advocates for the administration of the sacraments increased in number and power, until they obtained all they desired. The energy of an opinion, however tenaciously held, could not stand before the energy of a religious necessity.

The relaxation of the rule on this subject, therefore, had a very stimulating effect on the whole Connexion. "I have delayed writing," says Entwisle to Richard Reece, "in order that I might give you some information respecting the state of our affairs since our 'innovations,' as some call them. Mr. Hanby has administered the Lord's Supper at Thorner and at Holbeck, which was attended with a remarkable blessing. The accounts which the communicants give of both these seasons would delight you. The Lord was most powerfully and graciously present, insomuch that some who had been unfriendly to the administration of the sacrament by their own preachers, and went rather as spies, were so overwhelmed with the gracious presence of our blessed Saviour, that they are quite changed; and the accounts which are given of the overshadowings of the Holy Spirit in the ordinance, seem to have a good effect on the people."*

Violent assault on Adam Clarke.

Adam Clarke, then labouring in the Liverpool Circuit, narrowly escaped being murdered by two bigoted Papists. When preaching at a village called Aintree, two Roman Catholics, perfect strangers to him, attended the service; and although he made no allusion whatever to any doctrines in dispute between Papists and Protestants, they were struck with the sermon, and, immediately on leaving the place, laid a plan for taking vengeance on the preacher. They waylaid him on his return, and threw a stone

* "Memoir of Joseph Entwisle," p. 101.

with such dexterity and force as to cut through his hat, inflict a deep wound on his head, and fell him to the ground. His brother and a friend who accompanied him carried him to a cottage, where they wished to leave him for the night. But the residents, having learned all the circumstances of the case, and they also being Catholics, began to say that it was a pity the preacher had not been killed,—that he had no business to come there to preach. This language determined his friends to remove Mr. Clarke at all hazards: so, with difficulty and danger, they took him to his brother's house at Maghul. The next day he was, at his earnest request, conveyed to his own residence at Liverpool, his hair and clothes being covered with blood. He was laid up with this wound more than a month, and for a considerable part of the time in extreme danger. On the night of the outrage, while Mr. Clarke was in the cottage, his brother pursued the assailants, and had them arrested in a neighbouring public-house. But Mr. Clarke refused to prosecute, and on confessing their fault, and binding themselves before a magistrate not to offend again, they were discharged. But such leniency was lost on them. They continued to violate the laws of the country, and, at length, came to a tragic end.

Great revivals in Yorkshire. Halifax.

During this year there was a very extensive revival of the work of God in Yorkshire and some other parts. The blessed influence which had so richly fallen on Dewsbury, had, more or less, extended to the neighbouring places, and some indications of special good had appeared at Greetland in the Halifax Circuit. Just before the Conference of 1793, Robert Lomas, the junior minister on the Circuit, and whose devoted labours largely contributed to bring about those times of refreshing, went to that place to preach and hold a lovefeast. "As I was going to the

place," he writes, "and after I arrived there, I was led to inquire, 'What can I say to do the people good?' I committed myself to God, and I hope He directed me in the choice of subjects. I found liberty in preaching, but nothing out of the common way. In the lovefeast I bore my feeble testimony to the truth, and spoke explicitly of my own experience; saying, 'For some time I have found nothing contrary to the love of God and man, and, as far as I know, the Lord has cleansed me from all sin; but of this I want a clearer witness.' What was said seemed to have a good effect upon the people in general; they were evidently stirred up to lay hold on the Lord. I was desirous to spend a little time in prayer, and requested several of the brethren to use their liberty. They did so, pleading with God for themselves and others. I found myself uncommonly affected while one of them was praying for me. With my whole heart, with all the powers of my soul and body, I then cried to the Lord for a general blessing. As I prayed and pleaded, my faith was strengthened, and I said, 'O Lord, if it will not displease Thee, we would wrestle with Thee as Jacob did; and with Jacob Thou wast not displeased,' &c. Immediately my whole frame felt the power of God, and the whole house seemed filled with His glory. I continued praying, or rather praising God. My soul was lost and swallowed up in Him. I had before been blessed in a similar way; but never in that degree. The people were amazed; some glorified God: meanwhile the gracious influences waxed stronger and stronger; each individual *seemed* to forget everything, save his eternal interests. The world receded from his view, Satan lost his hold, evil agencies found nothing whereon to fasten; faith being strongly exercised, a wrestling spirit filled every heart, while every power both

of body and mind seemed to be engaged. Then the gates of heaven were opened, the glory of the Holy One of Israel filling the very place; and by some now living, and by hundreds transplanted to paradise, Greetland lovefeast will never be forgotten. Many found that peace which passeth understanding; many more proved the full efficacy of the atonement. The chapel was divided into small companies of praying souls, while, amid these, little bands of penitents were groaning for deliverance. The solemn song of thanksgiving was at times mingled with the sinner's cry, 'Ah wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?' Prayer for pardon, and a shout of praise for forgiveness, ascended together. Every tongue was unloosed, every heart touched; and, after continuing together until a protracted hour, the meeting was with great difficulty concluded." *

This was not a sudden burst of blessing which ended with the day. The people who had been thus strangely quickened and revived, returned to their several habitations full of holy love and heavenly zeal. They did not keep silence, but everywhere rejoiced to tell what God had done for their souls. The fire passed from heart to heart, until the whole Circuit was brought under the melting influence. Nearly twelve months afterward, in a letter to Dr. Coke, Mr. Atmore, the superintendent of the Circuit, makes the following statement: "We have added about seven hundred persons in our Circuit since last Conference; the far greater part of whom, there is reason to believe, are truly converted to the Lord, and can rejoice in Him as their Saviour and Redeemer. The work has commonly been carried on in prayer-meetings, which were singularly owned of God. Frequently ten, fifteen, or twenty souls

* Walker's "Methodism in Halifax," p. 192.

were either justified or fully sanctified in one of these meetings. Very often, while one of the brethren was earnestly engaged in prayer, the power of God descended, and some began to be deeply affected, and cried to God for mercy. Many were much agitated in their bodies, and even fainted away. The cries of others were very great indeed, and they remained in distress for several hours, till they were sensibly delivered from their misery, and enabled to rejoice in God. It has been no uncommon thing for six, eight, or ten persons to be in distress together in the same room. In these cases our friends continued in prayer with them, till they were brought into the liberty of the children of God. I have conversed with some hundreds of them, and have been surprised to hear the clear and distinct account which they gave of the work upon their souls. Some have now evinced the reality of the change upon their hearts, for twelve months, by a holy life; so that the mouths of gainsayers are stopped. I hope this work will spread over the whole earth."

Mr. Lomas adds the following particulars: "At these meetings there have been at times some irregularities; some crying out for distress and fear, while others have been shouting for joy and gladness of heart; perhaps numbers in distress at the same time, and one or more endeavouring to help or encourage each of them severally. The noise of these unusual proceedings spread far and wide, so that many of the baser sort from all quarters ran together, to see and hear for themselves; and I suppose it seldom happened that many went away without having their minds deeply affected with spiritual and eternal things. Some of them came with a set purpose to mock, disturb, and oppose, and they have often entered the chapel in this practice; but, before they

have proceeded far, the hand of the Lord has been heavy upon them, and they have roared out for the disquietude of their souls. The Lord has often sent these captives deliverance on the same evening, after having wrestled with Him in great agony of mind and body for some hours. The mercy of God in this has been truly wonderful; for numbers who had heard of the conversion of their companions, and came with a full determination not to cry out for mercy as they had done, but to mimic the cries of others, were, in spite of all their efforts, brought down on their knees, and forced to cry out in good earnest."

This extraordinary work extended to several of the surrounding Circuits, namely, Birstal, Huddersfield, Keighley, Bradford, Leeds, and even Hull. To two or three only of these will our limits allow us to refer. William Bramwell removed from Dewsbury to Birstal, in 1793. Birstal.
He left a revival behind him, and found one prepared for him in his new sphere of labour. His appointment was most opportune. The people were evidently prepared for a gracious visitation; but Bramwell's colleague, and several of the leaders, were disposed to look at anything so extraordinary with suspicion and distrust. Bramwell, however, succeeded in fostering the good work which he found in progress, until the plentiful shower of heavenly mercy was poured on the thirsty land. "Before his coming," said Mr. Thomas Pearson, of Gomersal, "we had a partial outpouring; but a mighty shower now descended, and the truth and power of God wonderfully prevailed." On Christmas Day, at a lovefeast, not less than fifty penitent sinners found peace with God, and rejoiced in the forgiveness of sins. From that day, all opposition, distrust, and coldness ceased; preachers,

leaders, and people united with one accord to promote the great work. On the Easter Day following, fifty more were converted to God. The chapels were everywhere crowded, the word of God had free course, and a clear increase of about five hundred souls to the Societies in the Circuit proved the genuineness and extent of this blessed visitation.

Leeds. The Leeds Circuit richly shared in this spiritual prosperity. The revival of 1795 is said by Moses Roberts to have been more general than any which has ever taken place in Leeds. The zealous exertions of two pious females were rendered very useful. "My soul has long wished to see a revival of the work of God," says John Allen, the second preacher on the Circuit, "and, glory be to the name of the Lord, I have now seen it with my eyes; and in such a way and manner as I never expected. The Lord has poured out His Spirit upon the people in a wonderful manner indeed! He has wrought by almost every sort of means, and sometimes without any means at all. Some have been alarmed by dreams and visions, and others by seeing people going to hear preaching, thinking that it indicated the near approach of the day of judgment. Some have had their hearts deeply affected, without being able to assign any cause. Even some opposers, who came to be diverted by the cries of distressed penitents, have been so powerfully wrought upon, as to be forced to weep louder than those whom they came to ridicule. A few, who, in order to divert themselves, pretended to be affected, were thrown into convulsions; and there is reason to believe, that some of those daring characters were snatched as brands from the burning. Since the last January, nine hundred or a thousand have been added to the Society; and, through mercy, most of them have stood hitherto. It has been very common for people to come to a meeting unconcerned,

and go away praising God for His mercy and love. Many of those brought in are very young. I joined eighty in Society one night at Bramley, and about sixty of them were unmarried persons. At Armley, where I joined thirty-six at once, about thirty were unmarried; and, at another time, out of sixty whom I joined, fifty seemed to be under twenty years of age. At many places the work has been attended with much noise and apparent confusion. At other places it has been carried on in a more still and regular way; and where this has been the case, the work seems to be more genuine. One thing injurious to the work has been the practice of some, who endeavoured to persuade persons in distress to say that they were brought into liberty. This I have endeavoured to put a stop to, as I believe that those that are brought into liberty will be ready of themselves to make confession unto salvation. And yet, notwithstanding a few things of which I could not approve, there has been as little of an objectionable nature in the course of the work as one could expect, considering the shortness of the time in which it was wrought, and the ignorance of many who became subjects of it." *

When the Methodists at Hull heard of this blessed work, and of the great numbers brought to the experience of salvation, they earnestly desired to share in similar blessings. Much ardent prayer, both in public and private, was offered for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Alexander Mather, who has given a full account of this revival, observes that there was "a too anxious attachment to decorum and order, and consequently a strong aversion to lamentations and cries, especially in a public congregation." Any movement, therefore, at all likely to disturb the usual quietness of orderly worship, Hull.

* "Methodist Magazine," 1812, p. 86.

would probably be regarded with coldness, if not actively opposed. "However, at the Christmas lovefeast this difficulty was surmounted, and in some degree we were willing to let God work upon the minds of the people which way He pleased, although we should incur the disagreeable reproach of being accounted enthusiasts. At this meeting we were put to the trial, and bore it very well: one person, being in great distress of mind, cried out mightily for mercy, and was soon delivered." From this time an earnest spirit of prayer generally prevailed among the people, and many instances of conversion took place. On Sunday, the ninth of March, when Mr. Brown preached, many were in great distress of mind. This, being generally known, induced a large and earnest congregation to attend on the Monday. "When Mr. Brown had concluded his discourse, he requested the Bands to meet in the vestry, and likewise invited any who were in distress to meet with them. But, the vestry not being large enough to contain all that tarried, they attempted to collect them into a body in one part of the chapel. This, however, they were not able to accomplish, because there were many in great anguish of mind in different parts of the chapel, and these required help as well as others; which obliged the brethren to pray with them and encourage them to look unto the Lord for His promised salvation. In a short time several, who had been in great agony, found the blessing of forgiving mercy, and, instantly rising up, declared what the Lord had done for their souls; and their friends who were around them united together in praising the Lord on their behalf; while others, in different parts of the chapel, still remained in distress. In this manner they continued until about ten persons found the Lord."

On the twenty-fifth of March, Mather went into Staffordshire, and returned on the sixth of April. From careful inquiry, he concluded that during his absence of twelve days, about one hundred and fifty persons had found peace with God, ten or twelve, and sometimes more, obtaining pardoning mercy each evening. "On April thirteenth," Mather proceeds to say, "we had our lovefeast: many of the new converts stood up before the congregation, and gave a clear and satisfactory account of the work of God upon their hearts. The meeting continued till five o'clock, and it was then with reluctance that they departed. The chapel was crowded with deeply serious hearers at six o'clock, and the prayer-meeting began as soon as the preaching concluded, and continued till ten, when the congregation was dismissed a second time, and they were entreated to return home, especially all those whose family affairs required their attendance. But this requisition had very little effect; for the greater part continued in prayer till one or two o'clock; and even some remained until the morning preaching. Above twenty found peace."

In the progress of this work of grace there were many interesting cases of remarkable conversions. "A servant of Mr. C——'s, of Cottingham, came to the market, and, being informed of the prayer-meetings, and the benefits that many people found at them, was so affected, that she resolved to stay all night, in order to be present at one of them; saying to herself, 'I can but lose my place: and what is that to the salvation of my soul?' Soon after the meeting began, she was convinced of her fallen state, and made sensible of the burden of sin; and before midnight received a sense of pardoning mercy. Next morning she returned home rejoicing in the Lord, to the astonishment

of her mistress, who is a pious person, and expresses great satisfaction in the evident change that her servant manifests in all her conduct and tempers." *

Sheffield.

Sheffield was similarly blessed, throughout a great part of the year, seven or eight persons finding peace each night; until at length a still more glorious effusion of grace was realized, and in three days above one hundred persons struggled into the kingdom of God.

We must, however, guard our readers against supposing, that these extraordinary visitations are regarded by the Wesleyan Methodists as the chief means of maintaining and extending the work of God. The constant and ordinary ministration of the Gospel is, in their judgment, the grand means of true evangelization. But, when the preaching of the word is clothed with extraordinary power, and crowned with deep and widespread success, such seasons are hailed as Pentecostal visitations, and gratefully acknowledged as special interpositions of mercy. During this year, there was a blessed combination of the ordinary and the special in the conversion of sinners. The result of what is technically called the "revival," is seen in the clear increase of more than three thousand members; and the increase in the other parts of the United Kingdom, where nothing of this extraordinary kind took place, exceeded five thousand.

As these signal triumphs of redeeming mercy are not even now generally understood, our account has been studiously given as nearly as possible in the language of eye-witnesses, and in the manner in which they published the case to the world.

This revival was regarded as a fit subject for profane merriment and buffoonery. A company of strolling players

* "Methodist Magazine," 1794, p. 650.

at Halifax put out a handbill,* announcing their intention to caricature the parties of all grades who had been connected with it. Yet, open to carnal and popular objections as some of these meetings might have been, the blessed results were too patent to admit of this public profanation. A spirited handbill, signed "No-Methodist," called on the people of the town to put down this intended outrage on all religious propriety; and the appeal was successful. Neither the player's address in vindication of his purpose, nor his interlude, was allowed to proceed.

Hitherto the Methodists of Leeds so strictly adhered to Wesley's purpose of keeping to the Church, that they had no service in their chapel from seven in the morning till half-past five in the evening. Many of the leaders and members strongly objected to this state of things; and, after repeated efforts to effect an alteration in the time of service, they, in 1793, procured Bethel chapel, which was fitted up, and opened for preaching in church hours.

The Conference of 1794 was held at Bristol, and began June twenty-eighth. Thomas Hanby was elected president, and Dr. Coke secretary. There was an increase, in the Missions in British America, of five Stations, and of three Missionaries; and, in those of the West Indies, of three Circuits, and of three Missionaries. The increase of members in Great Britain and Ireland amounted to eight thousand three hundred and forty-three. The Conference of 1794.

This year no minister left the itinerant ranks; twenty-

* "To which will be added a favourite interlude, (never performed here,) called, 'The Secret Disclosed,' the itinerant field orators' fanatical gibberish, lately delivered in this town, accompanied by all their pious ejaculations, celestial groans, and angelic swoonings, &c.: to conclude with a heaven-inspiring exit of young lambs, after their immaculate pastor. Orator, Mr. Grist. The flock by a chosen set."

three were received into full ministerial standing; and the hitherto unprecedented number of thirty-five young men were placed on trial, of whom eleven remained on the List of Reserve. The obituaries include THOMAS WESTALL, "a pattern of Christian simplicity," "one of the first Methodist preachers," and a "faithful labourer for forty years:"—JOHN VALTON, whose early history we have already recorded;* full of "holiness, charity, and zeal for the glory of God;" whose sermons were "plain, powerful, and convincing:"—ABRAHAM BISHOP, a native of Jersey, "one of the holiest young men upon earth," who began his labours amid the chilling fogs of Nova Scotia, and finished his work under the burning suns of the Antilles; a good preacher both in English and French; living "continually within the veil," and burning "with zeal for the salvation of souls:"—DANIEL GRAHAM, "a man of great piety and a deeply crucified spirit," beginning his toils in Ireland, and departing to heaven surrounded by weeping slaves in the West Indies:—WILLIAM WHITTAKER, "an old honest, faithful servant of the Lord, who suffered much, and died in peace:"—and MICHAEL MARSHALL, "a promising young man, suddenly snatched away."

In consequence of the political excitement which prevailed, the following question and answer were recorded on the Minutes:—"*Q.* Is it necessary to make any observations on the present important crisis of public affairs? *A.* We most affectionately entreat all our brethren, in the name of GOD, to honour the king. Let us duly pray for our rulers, and submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." Dr. Coke was directed to attend the next Irish Conference. Mr. Clarke of Coleraine, father of Adam Clarke, was appointed head master of

* Vol. i., pp. 392–394.

Kingswood school. On this occasion we find for the first time an address from the Irish to the British Conference entered upon the Minutes,—a practice continued to the present time. This friendly and useful correspondence originated in a general and deep impression on the minds of the preachers in England, that the Irish brethren were much alienated from them in affection, and that they had thoughts of rendering themselves an independent body. "To remove this impression as far as possible," says Mr. Crowther, "the Irish Conference agreed to draw up an address to their English brethren, as a token of their affection and sense of obligation to them. I drew up one for them, which was unanimously adopted, and very cordially received by the English Conference. An answer was returned to the next assembly of the Irish preachers." *

It is very difficult, by any collection of materials, to convey an adequate idea of the true character and extent of the evangelical labours of the Methodist preachers, and of the forbidding and disadvantageous circumstances in which most of them pursued their work of faith and self-sacrifice. Even at this time, although great progress had been made, the labour, exposure, and peril, to which they were subjected, were very great. At the Irish Conference of 1793, Matthew Lanktree was received as a probationer for the ministry, and placed on the list of reserve. Almost immediately after the Conference he was sent to supply a vacancy in the Craven Circuit. Early in September he was at his post, found out Mr. Alexander Moore, the superintendent, who received him kindly, and accompanied him part of the way to his first preaching-place. "Before parting," says Mr. Lanktree, "he took me by the hand, and in the most solemn manner repeated the

Matthew Lanktree's entrance on the work of the ministry.

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1845, p. 318.

apostolic injunction to Timothy: (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2:) 'I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.' Had we been surrounded by thousands of witnesses, the impressiveness of the occasion, to my mind, could scarcely have been exceeded. In the spirit of sacrifice and devotion, I proceeded to a country place called Garbratten, and took for my subject Luke iv. 18, and thus commenced my regular itinerancy. Our Circuit was extensive, and our ministerial labours necessarily abundant. The accommodations for man and horse were sometimes very disagreeable to nature; but I was saved from a disposition to complain, and generally found our dear friends kind and considerate. We had but few of those advantages which are now so generally furnished 'to make the man of God perfect;' but we were not destitute of some valuable helps for intellectual improvement. In addition to our Bibles and access to the throne of grace, there was also among us simplicity of heart, cordial love, and willingness to labour; and, being released from secular encumbrances, we had nothing to do but to save souls." *

We have quoted this not because it exhibits any wonderful or uncommon feature of the history of Methodism at this period, but for the very opposite reason, that it represents that which was ordinary and common. But, is not this simple narrative deeply instructive? Here, indeed, we have no pomp of forms, no parade of ceremonial ritual. No glare of ecclesiastical arrangement meets the eye; no studied sounds, either of music or oratory, fall upon the ear.

* LANKTREE'S "Biographical Narrative," p. 24.

Yet who does not recognise in this case all the great elements of ministerial appointment, devotedness, and zeal? Here, on the mountains of Ireland, while the masses around are heaving with political throes, stand the veteran minister and the youthful evangelist. The soul-stirring charge, which fell full of heavenly influence from the heart of Paul on the soul of Timothy, is given, if not with equal, yet certainly with similar unction, by the aged minister to his young brother; who, nerved and impelled by the hallowed utterance and the sanctified determination of his own mind, goes forth to toil, privation, and hardship, having "nothing to do but to save souls." This was a ministry adapted to carry out the great purposes of grace, and to build up the church of God.

Joseph Entwisle at Colne.

Joseph Entwisle this year left Leeds, where the congregations were large, and religion in a very prosperous state; where all temporal wants were met, and every outward comfort provided for him, and went to Colne, where the congregations were small, and religion languished,—a Circuit fifty miles in length, involving almost continual travelling, and much labour, privation, and suffering. His pious wife entered the following pithy memorandum in her journal: "We have removed from Leeds to Colne; from *Goshen to the Wilderness.*" "I have been out two days in the northern part of the Circuit," says Mr. Entwisle, when describing his entrance into his new sphere of toil. "I find the people few in number, and not lively. At one place they are not willing to put themselves a little out of the way to provide the preachers lodging. For the sake of a number of poor people in the neighbourhood, I have promised them a sermon once a fortnight at noon. I called at another place to-day, which is in the Plan once a fortnight; but they cannot receive us more than once a month. At

this place (Rimmington) I am received very kindly by a pious widow and her son. While wandering in the hills, and with difficulty finding my way to the places, at a great distance from my dear wife, who is near her confinement, and my dear little boy, who is just beginning of the small-pox, I have frequently found a gloom beginning to over-spread my mind, but have been enabled to cast my burden upon the Lord, and He has sustained me. I feel the vast importance of my new station and office; near eleven hundred souls are committed to my care. Important charge! Who is sufficient for these things? O my God, give me much heavenly wisdom, much zeal for thy glory, much love to precious souls, much success in my poor labours, and, above all, much communion with Thyself!" *

The struggle through which Mr. Benson had passed at Bristol, in consequence of the violent conflicts occasioned by the different opinions respecting the administration of the sacraments in the Methodist chapels,† had severely taxed his health and spirits, and a change of scene and action seemed very desirable. Being informed that the proposed Plan of Pacification was universally approved by the Methodists of Cornwall, and that they most earnestly desired him to visit them, he complied with their request. Having arranged with Mr. Moore that the ensuing twenty-sixth of June should be observed as a day of fasting and prayer for the restoration of peace and concord, he set out, in company with a friend,‡ on his journey to the west. Very few ministerial visits have been attended with more remarkable or more blessed results.

* "Memoir of Joseph Entwisle," p. 121.

† See *ante*, p. 120.

‡ The late William Carne, Esq., of Penzance, whose earnest solicitations principally induced Mr. Benson to take the journey.

In accordance with the practice of the times, as to persons in similar circumstances, the two friends travelled in a one-horse chaise. The first day they reached Taunton in time for Mr. Benson to preach at seven o'clock. He observes, "The congregation was good, and I was much assisted in explaining and applying, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?'" Having preached at six in the morning, he left Taunton for Collumpton, where he preached that evening, and the next morning. He occupied the rest of the day in a short journey to Exeter, where he preached in the evening to a large congregation, on, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." The next day brought him, after a long and weary journey, in time to preach at Launceston to a large and serious congregation. Thence he came to St. Austell, where he preached three times, on Saturday evening, and the Sabbath, to very crowded congregations. On Monday, when he had proceeded half-way towards Truro, he was met by many of the friends from that town and Redruth. He preached at Truro in the evening, with great freedom and power, to a crowded audience.

Mr. Benson's visit to Cornwall.

Hitherto, Mr. Benson had been uniformly received with kindness and respect, and had preached everywhere to large congregations, but no extraordinary influence or remarkable results attended his ministrations. The following day, however, he passed on to Redruth, and preached in the evening from, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" &c. "Never did I see a place so crowded, I think, and never did I see a congregation more affected than at Redruth to-night," was the record in his Journal. Many were deeply convinced of sin, and some obtained pardoning mercy, under that sermon.

Remarkable success of his ministry.

Hundreds were so deeply affected, that they remained in the chapel, engaged in earnest prayer, a great part of the night. The next day Mr. Benson preached at Tuckingmill. The author has heard that service described many times by his father, who was one of the congregation. As the chapel would not contain a quarter of the assembly, the preacher went to a meadow just above, to the south of the present chapel, whither at least five thousand persons followed him. Taking his stand on a table, he preached from, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation," &c. (1 Tim. i. 15.) "I had not long spoken," he observes, "before such ideas were presented to my mind, and words given me, that many were cut to the heart on all sides. Numbers were in tears, and many cried out in distress in different parts of the congregation. I continued to speak until I could speak no more. But I observed, before I concluded, that any who were in distress might retire into the chapel, and that some of our friends would pray with them. I then gave out a hymn, and prayed. One woman came up to me before I got off the table, and, with streaming eyes and a heart full of gratitude and love, declared what God had done for her soul. As soon as I had dismissed the congregation, numbers thronged into the chapel.....The next morning I was informed that near twenty in all were brought that night to taste that the Lord is gracious; and many of our friends were of opinion that not fewer than one hundred were awakened under that sermon."*

When we contemplate such scenes as these, we do not wonder at the saying of the great and good Robert Hall, "Sir, Mr. Benson is irresistible, absolutely irresistible."†

* Macdonald's "Life of Benson," p. 279.

† Everett's "Adam Clarke," p. 115.

An excellent minister, fully acquainted with the neighbourhood, observes on the above, "All that is said here falls greatly short of the facts. The impression still left on some persons, thirty-six years afterward, was deep and hallowed beyond example." From the testimony of eye-witnesses we are prepared to assert, that this is a most modest statement, and conveys a very inadequate idea (as, indeed, any verbal description must) of the effects produced on this occasion. Nor must this be confounded with a "revival" in the usual sense of the term. Here the word of the minister, expounding and applying a passage of Holy Writ, containing nothing of a terrific nature, but full of encouragement, seemed imbued with the mighty energy of the Holy Ghost; and numbers, without distinction of age or character, fell as the slain of the Lord before its resistless power. We have been personally acquainted with some of the best educated, most intellectual, and energetic men of this locality, who were brought to cry mightily to God for pardoning mercy under this discourse.

The next day Mr. Benson preached to a large congregation, and with powerful effect, at Hayle, and the day following to about fifteen hundred at St. Ives. These labours so affected his voice, that he was scarcely audible at Penzance on the twelfth. The next day he visited the Land's End, and preached at St. Just in the evening. His mind was so much affected with the bold scenery of this neighbourhood, that he could not avoid incorporating an allusion to it in his sermon. He told the people, in reference to the prospect at the Land's End, that he "had just been looking from time into eternity," and reminded them "that they were almost come to the Land's End of life, and inquired whether they were come

to the end of their sins, or were determined to go into the wide ocean of eternal misery."

Sunday, June fourteenth, Mr. Benson preached in the morning at Penzance, and at Mousehole in the afternoon; and, as hundreds came who could not get into the chapel in the morning, and the congregation in the evening was much larger, he stood in the market-place at Penzance, and addressed about six thousand persons on "the judgment to come." On his return, he preached again at Tuckingmill at mid-day. As the hour was so unpropitious, he expected a small congregation, but above ten thousand persons met together, to whom he preached with great power and blessed effect, from, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink," &c. (John vii. 37.) On the evening of the same day he preached to a still larger congregation at Gwennap, with such glorious success, that, after he was exhausted, the people filled the chapel, and continued in earnest prayer. Many were converted to God that night, and others on the following morning. The remaining days of this week he was employed at Penryn and Falmouth, preaching to large and deeply serious congregations.

Sunday, the twenty-first of June, he preached at St. Agnes in the morning, where about five thousand assembled to hear him, while numbers wept under the word. In the afternoon he preached before the market-house at Redruth. Fourteen or fifteen thousand persons filled the street, houses, alleys, and every available space. All the windows were crowded, and many people heard from the roofs and ridges of the houses. To these the preacher delivered a most remarkable and effective address, on, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." (Dan. v. 27.) Forty years after we have heard persons speak with rapture and astonishment of the marvellous ingenuity, appropriate-

ness, and power of this discourse. After an interval scarcely sufficient for him to get tea, he hastened to Gwennap, where, in and around the celebrated "PIT," about twenty thousand persons waited to hear him. This vast assembly he addressed on, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God," &c. (Rev. xx. 12.) Returning to Redruth, he preached the next morning, at seven, on the parable of the sower. The chapel was crowded at this early hour; several were awakened, and at least one person entered into the glorious liberty of the children of God. In the evening he preached in a field near Truro to some thousands of people. On his way back to Bristol, he preached at St. Austell, Bodmin, Camelford, and Liskeard.

Its important bearing on ministerial character.

We regard the very great power and success of Mr. Benson's ministrations on this tour with particular interest. Considered as exerting a glorious evangelical influence for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, the labours of this journey were more important to the interests of religion than many exertions loudly and largely celebrated by the church. But on other grounds it also deserves especial notice. Mr. Benson was fully identified with the unpopular side of the Bristol disputes. Was he on this account to be regarded as a factious partisan? Those who advocated the cause which he espoused, were by a person, then a Methodist preacher, declared to be supporting a time-serving policy, which shrunk from the cross, courted the world, and was "carnal, sold under sin." Were these charges just? The vindication of Mr. Benson's religious character affords a full and complete reply. And does not the success attending his preaching in West Cornwall abundantly supply this? What can more fully establish the religious reputation of a Christian man and minister, than such abundant fruit of his labours? We see

him at Bristol supporting the cause which he believed to be right, through evil report and good report; yet, zealous as he was in its support, he was prepared to meet its most energetic opponents in the spirit of Christian candour and love, and devise with them a plan of reconciliation. Having accomplished this desirable object, he takes a journey to visit some Christian friends. And how is his time employed? Not in elegant leisure, or intellectual exercises, but in preaching the Gospel of Christ with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, to the awakening and conversion of hundreds, and the spiritual instruction of thousands. Differences of opinion and judgment among men of such piety and zeal will not injure, but tend ultimately to consolidate and build up the Christian Church with which they are connected.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE CONFERENCE OF 1795 TO THAT OF 1800.

The Conference of 1795 was held at Manchester, beginning on Monday, July twenty-seventh. Joseph Bradford, the friend and travelling companion of Wesley, and who was supposed to belong to neither of the parties in the contention about the sacramental rites, was chosen president, and Dr. Coke secretary. There were many changes in the names of Circuits, but only an additional one was formed. The Mission Stations in the West Indies were reduced from ten to seven, and the preachers from seventeen to twelve. The Conference of 1795

The obituary list, comprehending ten names, presents two or three remarkable features. With the exception of Matthew Lowes, "an old and faithful preacher," "remarkable for humility, meekness, and seriousness;" Charles Boon, in whom were "blended the softness of moderation, with the inflexibility of truth; the meekness of wisdom, with the ardour of piety; and the desire of unity and peace, with strict attention to order and discipline;" and John Broadbent, "a zealous man, and truly alive to God,"—all were taken away in early ministerial life. Benjamin Pearce, "of unblameable character and considerable usefulness," died of putrid fever on his way to Barbadoes; and John Cook, "in the prime of life and the full triumph of faith," fell by the same terrible disease shortly after arriving in Tortola. William Butterfield, "an acceptable and useful preacher," was brought to the grave "by an inflamma-

tion of the brain." WILLIAM MARTIN, "of promising abilities, and considerable usefulness," was carried off by malignant scarlet fever, after an illness of five days. MARK WILLIS, "an excellent young man in the bloom of life," and THOMAS ELLIOTT, "of a strong understanding and good gifts," were swept away by consumption; while SAMUEL HODGSON, of "unblemished character, and a generous, liberal mind," who had "acquired a good deal of knowledge, and walked humbly with God," was drowned near Sunderland, by the upsetting of a ferry boat. Just before he "sank as lead in the mighty waters," he was heard to say, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit; and have mercy on my fellow-sufferers!"

But "if God bury His workmen," He still provides for carrying on His work. Twenty "young men whose hearts the Lord had touched," among whom were Josiah Hill and Thomas Stanley, were ready to catch the falling mantle of these ascending Elijahs; while twenty-four were ordained to the full work of the ministry; and none departed from the vineyard through unfaithfulness.

Besides the grand business of this Conference in the settlement of the Plan of Pacification;* other arrangements were made which merit notice. Measures were adopted to prevent the unreasonably large attendance of preachers at Conference. It was resolved that no alteration should be made in the government of the Connexion, unless first proposed and agreed to in full Conference. The embarrassed state of the Preachers' and Contingent Funds was fully set forth, and means for their improvement urged. Directions for the religious observance of the Lord's Day, for the administration of the Lord's Supper, for the change of stewards, against the use of tobacco and snuff by preachers, and for

* See *ante*, p. 30.

the appointment of a regular Quarterly Fast-day, were also given.

This Methodistic year, preceded by the Plan of Pacification, from which settled peace in the Societies was expected, proved to be one of much trial, perplexity, and embarrassment to the preachers generally, and especially to those who took a leading part in connexional affairs. Great financial and commercial embarrassment prevailed; a bad harvest, followed by serious reverses in war, in conjunction with a very extended political excitement, rendered the state of the nation most unsatisfactory.

Unfavourable circumstances of the country.

Nor had Methodism merely to struggle with these national and external evils. Almost immediately after the Conference, Alexander Kilham, who had previously issued many anonymous publications adapted to excite the Methodists to discontent and opposition to their connexional economy, came out avowedly as a reformer of the system. The "Progress of Liberty," bearing his name as the author, was published in September, 1795; and produced intense and continued excitement throughout the Connexion. These circumstances were very unfavourable to the advancement of spiritual religion, and especially to evangelizing operations. Yet, spite of external and internal difficulties and oppositions, Methodism held on its way, and its ministrations were crowned with the Divine blessing.

At Bristol, where there had been so much discord and dispute, a better spirit was induced. When Mr. Benson returned from his tour into Cornwall, and the proposed Plan of Pacification was approved by Mr. Moore and his friends, harmony was so far restored that Benson and Moore exchanged pulpits; the one preaching to a large congregation at Portland, and the other conducting a very effective service in the chapel at Guinea Street. Unusual and un-

Improved state of feeling at Bristol.

explained circumstances detained Mr. Benson in Bristol until the early part of November, which enabled him to use all his influence with those who had been attached to him and the trustees for perfecting the reconciliation so auspiciously begun. He gladly availed himself of the opportunity; and, although further differences afterwards arose, which were not finally adjusted until 1797, no serious rupture took place.

Disputes at Halifax.

Similar Christian affection and discretion were not, however, universally displayed. Halifax was the fourth country Circuit in the Connexion, in regard of numbers and importance. Considerable difficulty had been felt there during the preceding year respecting the sacraments. A very large majority of the officers and members desired to receive them from the preachers in their own chapels, while a very respectable minority, headed by Mr. Samuel Waterhouse, an influential and wealthy member, was rigidly attached to the Church. This party, numbering five leaders and one hundred and twenty members, petitioned the Conference for a continued prohibition of the sacraments in Methodist chapels, urging that the decision by lot in 1792, having in effect the sanction of the unchangeable Jehovah, ought, in their judgment, to be made perpetual. When these persons found that the Conference, rejecting their request, had adopted the Plan of Pacification, they seceded, and held their first separate service, a lovefeast, at the residence of Mr. Waterhouse. But, sincere and conscientious as they may have been, they had taken a step for which they were entirely unprepared. They had provided no place for regular worship, nor had they the means of conducting it. After being for some time as sheep having no shepherd, they began to lament their hasty departure from their former fold, to which nearly all of them ultimately returned.

Only Mr. Waterhouse and a few others persisted in remaining in the unhappy isolation in which they had placed themselves.

Persecuting statute of St. Vincent disallowed by the king in council.

After his return from the West Indies in 1793, Dr. Coke, accompanied by five or six of the preachers, waited on the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state, to know the result of the memorial which had been presented, praying for the abolition of the intolerant and persecuting Act of the House of Assembly of the Island of St. Vincent. The deputation were informed, "that his Majesty in council had been graciously pleased to disannul the Act of the Assembly of St. Vincent's, and that his Majesty's pleasure would be notified by the first packet that sailed to the West Indies." By this means religious liberty was granted to the inhabitants of that island, despite the intolerant efforts of the local government.

Encouraged by this success, Dr. Coke, who had not forgotten the misery of the inhabitants of St. Eustatius, in the following year went over to Holland, in the hope of securing liberty of conscience for the population, who were literally deprived of the Gospel by the tyranny of the governor. In a personal interview, the Stadtholder courteously listened to his petition, but gave him no definite reply. After waiting a considerable time, he had to return disappointed to England.

Abortive attempt to found a colonial Mission in Africa.

The Doctor, still devoted to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, had his attention directed, in the next instance, to the feasibility of planting a colonial Mission, by means of pious and industrious artisans, in the Foulah country, on the West Coast of Africa. Having brought this scheme under the notice of those best acquainted with that country, he found that it was regarded with favour,

and great hopes of success. An arrangement was made with five or six individuals, who were strongly recommended to him. The Doctor, with his usual zeal, liberality, and energy, provided them with an ample outfit of tools, clothing, and other necessaries, and saw them sail from Portsmouth, January, 1796. The vessel safely reached her destination; but most of the persons were very unsuitable for the enterprise, and it soon became a total failure.

In reviewing the history and progress of evangelical churches, we frequently meet with individual conversions which, either on account of the marvellous display of the power of grace which they exhibit, or the extensive results which have arisen from them, are invested with public and lasting importance. Such cases, however valuable as subjects for Christian biography, are equally just and proper elements of the general history of the church.

The Dairyman's Daughter.

One such conversion now occurred under the Methodist ministry in Southampton. It was that of Elizabeth Wallbridge, universally known as "the Dairyman's Daughter," the story of whose simple but earnest piety has been diffused through the world, by the beautiful tract of Legh Richmond. She was a native of the Isle of Wight, and, at the time of her conversion, in the service of Mr. Rolstone, a gentleman resident in Southampton. The domestic attendants in this family were three females, and Robert Taylor, who was a Methodist. Elizabeth was proud, vain, and particularly fond of dress. Her brother, resident on the island, who had been brought to God, and joined the Methodist Society, had written Elizabeth a letter, in which he earnestly besought her to give her heart to God. She

very probably felt the full force of this appeal, although the only apparent effect of the letter was a violent prejudice against the Methodists. The little Society rented a large room,* in which public worship was conducted.† In the latter part of 1795, while Elizabeth and a fellow-servant were at their work, Robert Taylor came in, and said, "Maids, will you go this evening and hear preaching in the Methodist chapel? Mr. Crabbe, the missionary from the Isle of Wight, is to preach. He is very much liked as a preacher; and I think, if you were to go and hear for yourselves, you would be pleased with him." Elizabeth gave him a reply, which left no hope that she would comply with his request. Nevertheless, she and her companion talked over this strange proposal, for as such they regarded it. Curiosity was at work; Elizabeth wanted to know something of the people with whom her brother had become associated; and she had a new gown which she wished to exhibit. When the time arrived, Elizabeth and her female companion attended the preaching. Mr. Crabbe selected for his text, "Be clothed with humility." Although the sermon was a direct attack on Elizabeth's ruling passion, she respected the preacher and the service, and both the girls determined to attend again. This second time Mr. Crabbe preached from, "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." (Zech. iv. 7.) While the preacher, with the authority of an ambassador for Christ, exposed the sins of vanity, selfishness, and pride,

* See *ante*, p. 216.

† There were four preachers on the Portsmouth Circuit; but the Societies provided for only three of them; the other, being regarded as a missionary, was wholly supported by the Conference.

Converted to God.

Elizabeth saw that she was the very reverse of being clothed with humility. The mountain flowed down at the presence of the Lord. Wounded by the sword of the Spirit, she returned home in silence, indignant at herself. There was now no foolish talking and jesting about things sacred; her finery was all removed; henceforth her attire was neat, but particularly plain. She gave her heart to the Lord, and herself to His people, and realized the love of God shed abroad in her heart, and the blessedness of Christian communion.

Lived and died a pious Methodist.

Within the year following her conversion, Elizabeth's health failed, and she returned to her parents. Getting a little better, she went to reside in a Methodist family at West Cowes. After this, she lived in other Christian families, to render what service she could, her health not allowing her to take a regular place. At length she was confined to her father's cottage, where Mr. Richmond found her, and ministered much religious consolation to the dying saint. Her Methodist friends, however, were her constant companions. They surrounded her dying bed, and followed her remains to the grave. The "remarkably decent-looking woman," of whom Mr. Richmond speaks, was Mrs. Prangnell, of Merston, in whose class Elizabeth met, when in that neighbourhood.*

Whether Legh Richmond knew that Elizabeth Wallbridge was a Methodist, cannot now be ascertained. Most assuredly he was mistaken as to the instrument of her conversion. Very likely he did not know that any Methodist preacher was called a "missionary," and was misled by the appellation. This seems to be certain, from a conversation between Mr. Crabbe, under whose ministry Elizabeth was brought to God, and Mr. Richmond himself. "I was well acquainted with that deservedly

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1838, p. 107.

beloved servant of Christ," says Mr. Crabbe; "and I once ventured to ask him at his own house, 'Pray, did you know the instrument of Elizabeth's conversion?' 'No,' was the answer; 'but I expect it was under the ministry of a missionary, who was going abroad—to New South Wales. I think it must have been Mr. Marsden.' The remark evidently showed how he had misunderstood Elizabeth's reference to a missionary. I said no more, only rejoicing in my heart that the Holy Spirit had converted her."* In the same spirit we rejoice, however the fact may be generally unknown, that the pious and amiable subject of the tract, of which more than four millions of copies have been circulated, and which, it is said, has been the means of converting three hundred and fifty persons, was the direct fruit of Methodist preaching in the bricklayer's loft at Southampton.

Conversion of Mrs. Slacke.

The following case may rank under the same general category as the foregoing:—Mrs. Slacke, the lady of a gentleman of station and property, resident in Annandale, county of Leitrim, Ireland, being on a visit to Dublin, took lodgings at a respectable bookseller's, whose two apprentices were Methodists. These young men slept in one room, and it was their constant practice, before retiring, to read a portion of God's word, and pray together. Another apprentice in the house was generally with them on these occasions. This room was immediately above Mrs. Slacke's apartments, and she frequently heard sounds, which for some time she could not understand. Prompted by curiosity, she went quietly upstairs, and listened at the room-door. She was much impressed at first with the novelty of the thing. Her heart became deeply affected, and she was led to repeat her visits.

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1838, p. 108.

She was a lady of accomplished manners, and had mixed in the most fashionable society; but she now discovered there was something in religion to make the soul happy, and which she had not experienced. She ventured to hear preaching at Whitefriars Street, and, on her return home, resolved to exert her influence to introduce Methodism into her family. Fully aware of her husband's High-Church principles, she proceeded with great caution. She induced Mr. Slacke to invite Mr. Creighton, a pious clergyman, to preach in Annandale; he did so, and promised to come again. Mr. Creighton, being very friendly with Andrew Blair, the Methodist preacher at Sligo, engaged him to accompany him on his next visit. After Mr. Creighton had preached in the morning, Mr. Slacke was asked if he had any objection to a Methodist preacher giving them a sermon in the evening. His heart had been touched by the word, and he consented; but asked, "Where is he?" When Mr. Blair, whose appearance was very youthful, was pointed out to him, he exclaimed, "What! that boy a preacher?" Mr. Blair, who possessed more than ordinary ministerial talent, delivered an impressive discourse, which was much blessed to Mr. Slacke and his family. From that period the preachers regularly visited Annandale. The amiable and pious lady who had introduced Methodism to her family and neighbours, continued steady in her attachment to it to the end of her life. In the year 1795 she became delicate. One evening, she retired, as usual, for reading and prayer; but not coming down stairs at the accustomed time, one of the family went to ascertain the cause, when she was found on her knees in the attitude of prayer, but her spirit had entered into the joy of her Lord.*

Its happy results: her pious death.

* From the MS. account of the late Rev. Mr. Fergusson.

The Conference of 1796 was held in London, July 25th. Mr. Thomas Taylor was chosen president, and Dr. Coke secretary. The number of Circuits in Great Britain and Ireland had now increased to one hundred and forty-three.* At the bottom of the list of Circuits we find:—"Missionaries for Africa, Archibald Murdoch, William Patten." A note at the foot of the page states, that, Dr. Coke having reported to the Conference the failure of the attempt to establish a colony in the Foulah country, "after prayer and mature consideration, the Conference unanimously judged that a trial should be made in that part of Africa, on the proper missionary plan. The two brethren above mentioned having voluntarily offered themselves for that important work, the Conference solemnly appointed them for it, and earnestly recommended them and their great undertaking to the public and private prayers of the Methodist Society." † The Conference of 1796.

The ministerial mortality, during this year of anxiety and turmoil, was not great. John Miller, a German, whose uncouth pronunciation of our mother tongue raised a host of objections in every new Circuit, but who soon gained the affections of his flock; William Denton, "a serious and exemplary" young man, received into full connexion at the previous Conference; and John Brettell, who had served in the ministry with steady uprightness nearly a quarter of a century,—all died in peace. James Townley, John Burdsall, and twenty others were admitted on trial; and Richard Seed, James Lyons, William Franklin, and Alexander Kilham are recorded as "desisting from travelling."

* This addition was made by the following changes: Merthyr Tydvil and Charlemont ceased to be Circuits; and Cardiff, Barrow, Pontefract, Youghal, Connemara, Dungannon, and Armagh, became Circuits.

† Minutes, 8vo., vol. i., p. 335.

After the trial and expulsion of Mr. Kilham, the Conference enacted several important regulations. It was resolved: "From henceforward we recommend it to every Circuit to provide the horse or horses necessary for that Circuit. But if any Circuit choose rather for the preachers to ride their own horses, we submit, on this condition, that no preacher shall make any collection or subscription toward paying for horses; but that all collections judged needful for this purpose shall be made either by the Circuit stewards, or the stewards of the particular Societies."

It was further resolved: "Let no man, nor number of men, in our Connexion, on any account or occasion, circulate letters, call meetings, do, or attempt to do, anything new, till it has been first appointed by the Conference."

"No person shall be suffered on any pretence to receive the Lord's Supper among us, unless he be a member of our Society, or receive a note of admission from the assistant, which note must be renewed quarterly."

"As we desire to have every proper information on whatever concerns ourselves or our people, we will gladly receive intelligence not only from our Quarterly and Leaders' Meetings, but from any individual member of our Society, as well at the District Meeting as at the Conference."

As some statements had been made during the preceding year, calculated to damage the Conference in the estimation of the people, we are informed that "the letters and addresses were read in full Conference, and a committee appointed to examine them and report to the Conference;" and it is added, "And this is the way that is always done, if the letter or address is of the least moment."*

Mr. Kilham having been expelled, he was free to pursue

* Myles's "Chronological History," p. 237.

his own course of action, and might have devoted his time and energy to the dissemination of the Gospel, in any locality where his admirers were sufficiently numerous to afford him support; but such a return to the peaceful labours of a Gospel minister did not accord with his views. He exerted himself to the utmost to induce the Methodist people to adopt his opinions, and to coerce their ministers into compliance with his will. The following is an extract from an "Address" published soon after his expulsion, and signed by one hundred and sixty-seven leaders and others, of Leeds, who had adopted his views, and united with him to carry them into practical operation. Addressing the people, but especially the trustees, leaders, stewards, and local preachers, it tells them that "they had nothing to do, but to exert the influence which was in their hands, to have everything established which was necessary for their future prosperity. Those of them who were trustees had the whole power of the chapels in their hands, whether they were fixed on the Conference plan or not. The preachers being supported by their voluntary subscriptions, if they would not come into their measures, they had the power to withhold support from them. If this method were taken, the body of the preachers would see that their dependence was upon the people, and not upon what is generally called the Conference. They would probably throw off the authority of those who now govern, and would become the people's servants for Christ's sake; the ruling party would be brought to submit or retire: but should all the travelling preachers stand it out against them, and refuse to supply the chapels on those terms, it would be possible to prevail on pious acceptable local preachers to come out to their help. In this way corruption would be purged out of the Connexion,

The course of agitation pursued after the expulsion of Mr. Kilham.

and everything would be brought into a flourishing state."

We will not stay to investigate the morality of the proposal to starve ministers of the Gospel into a compliance with principles and practices which, in their judgment and conscience, they condemned, but proceed to direct attention to the means recommended as likely to be successful in attaining these objects. "Either in Leaders' Meetings, (or rather call more public meetings in the principal Societies,) converse freely with each other, and advise upon the best mode of seeking a redress of grievances. Invite leaders, stewards, trustees, local preachers, and others to meet together, (without the preachers,) from all parts of the Circuit, that you may mutually deliberate on the best plans that can be devised, to save the Connexion from ruin. Let nothing deter you from this; neither the threatenings nor the promises of any preachers. In them draw up your sentiments freely, and appoint two or more of your body to meet delegates in a special District Meeting from the other Circuits. The Circuit Meetings should be held in May, (1797,) if possible. The delegates of the Circuits should meet in the most central place in the District, about the middle of June, and deliberate on the most eligible plan to propose to the Conference. It would be well to print their views on the subject, and not only send them through their own District, but to the different Districts. Send by all means a suitable number of delegates to the next Conference. If the delegates are firm, and will not be moved on any pretence whatever, a majority of the preachers are sure to come into their measures."

When such a course of turbulent agitation was so earnestly recommended to the members of a voluntary religious society, and urged with such specious arguments,

we must be prepared to expect very serious injury to the religious character and progress of the community. Enough of this occurred to alarm the boldest, and distress the firmest, of the Methodist preachers. One of them, writing to a friend, says: "No very good news! Leeds is in a flame of contention. Mr. Kilham is to fix his residence there, and from thence the rays of the 'Methodist Monitor,' a periodical publication by A. K., are to illuminate the three kingdoms. Manchester, Liverpool, and Chester are in a distracted state. We enjoy perfect peace everywhere in this Circuit, (Wakefield,) Barnsley excepted. There a few violent persons carry matters to an extreme. They used formerly to meet to discuss politics; now they meet to discuss *Methodistical politics*. O, what danger there is of religion, love to God and man, suffering by these disputes! There is a great appearance of a division in the Body now. How these will terminate, God only knows. We are like chaos. But He can bring order out of confusion." *

The confident expectation of the agitators, and the alarm and apprehension of sound Methodists, were fully sustained by the events of the day. Considering the difference of opinion which obtained, not only among the people, but also among the preachers themselves, there was no rational probability that the Connexion could withstand the cumulative agencies employed to disturb and distract it. Either a ruinous division, or an equally ruinous prostration of all power before an unlimited democracy, seemed inevitable. Nor can we find in history a more manifest display of providential interposition, than was witnessed in the result. The "Methodist Monitor" *was* circulated, the principal Societies *were* visited, no efforts

* "Life of Joseph Entwisle," p. 147.

were spared; yet Methodism was not destroyed,—was scarcely injured by the storm.

Richard Watson a preacher.

The Conference of 1796 is memorable in the annals of Methodism, as that which received Richard Watson into the ministry. This great man was an extraordinary person at a very early age. When only fourteen, he was six feet two inches high; but the development and maturity of his intellectual powers were much more remarkable than that of his physical system. Converted to God in the first year of his apprenticeship, he began to preach when about fifteen years of age. After he had laboured a few months as a local preacher, his master, being deeply impressed with the conviction that his abilities qualified him for a position superior to that of a labouring tradesman, generously gave up his indentures, and released him from all further obligation. In a few months he was sent to supply the place of Mr. Thomas Cooper, whose health had failed in the Newark Circuit; and at this Conference, when only sixteen years and six months old, he was appointed as Mr. Cooper's colleague in the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Circuit. On account of his youth, his name does not appear in the Minutes, neither in the list of preachers received on trial, nor in connexion with the Circuit. His name was intended to be entered, as having travelled one year, in 1797; but in the octavo Minutes, both in the list of preachers, and in connexion with the Castle-Donington Circuit, it is misprinted "Robert Watson."

Joseph Nightingale's first conversion.

In the Methodist Magazine for 1797, under the heading of "The Conversion of a Deist," there is a very interesting account in a letter to Mr. Benjamin Rhodes. It details the case of a young man, the son of members of the Church of England, who was ignorant of the principles of any denomination of Christians, until he was bound an apprentice to a

Socinian. Possessing an inquiring and energetic mind, he diligently read the works of Priestley, Hopton, and other writers of that school, and fully imbibed the doctrines of Socinianism and Materialism. Afterward, by reading extracts from Paine's works, he was induced to take the one remaining step, and plunge into the thick darkness of Deism. The operation of these principles was soon seen in his conduct; for he says that he was regarded "by almost all who knew him, in the village where he lived, as little less than a devil incarnate." In this state he was hurried into crimes "too shocking to mention," which involved him in so much shame and trouble, that he meditated suicide. After suffering the greatest misery, he was led to believe that he had a soul, and that there was truth in the word of God. He then joined the Methodist Society, found pardoning mercy, and says, "My soul was filled with redeeming love, and peace which passeth all understanding. This was on the 18th of June, 1796." This letter was signed "J. N.,"—the initials of the celebrated Joseph Nightingale. We have been more particular in describing this his first connexion with Methodism, as we shall have further occasion to refer to him.

Conversion and labours of Thomas Geake.

Few men, not fully devoted to the work of the ministry, were more useful in spreading the religion of Christ at this period, than Mr. Thomas Geake, of St. Germains, in the south-east of Cornwall. He was brought to a knowledge of salvation principally by the ministry of Dr. Adam Clarke, when he, then a very young man, was stationed in the Plymouth Circuit in 1785. Soon after his conversion Mr. Geake had it powerfully impressed on his mind that he ought to preach, and, after much serious consideration and prayer, he began to call sinners to repentance. Spiritual religion was but little known in the district where he

resided, and the work of a preacher involved not only serious labour, but great danger. Yet the claims of the people on those whom the truth had made free were very great. Souls were "perishing for lack of knowledge." In many respects, Mr. Geake was well adapted for the work upon which he had entered. He was tall and robust in person, had a powerful voice, possessed sound, sterling sense, and uncommon intrepidity. All these were needed; for the clergy and magistrates of the neighbourhood manifested every disposition to prevent Methodist preaching, as far as the law would allow; while wild lawless mobs were everywhere prepared to attempt the same object by brutal violence. In consequence of this opposition, it was necessary for preachers to have all the protection afforded by the law. Mr. Geake, his brother Richard, (also a local preacher,) and the Rev. Mark Daniel of Launceston, went to Exeter, and obtained licences to preach, as it was scarcely possible to obtain them from the prejudiced magistrates in their own neighbourhood.

On one occasion, while Mr. Geake was preaching at Wollaton, in the parish of St. Mullion, a mob entered the house with a large goat, for the purpose of disturbing the congregation; but, not succeeding, they cried out, "We will pull down the preacher;" and immediately endeavoured to put their threat into execution. While the people were endeavouring to protect him from their violence, Mr. Geake said, "Make way for them to come forward, and not one of them will dare to touch me." When they were come up to him, their courage forsook them, and they stood speechless. Mr. Geake then took up the Bible, and said, "Now hear me for half an hour; and, if I say anything contrary to this Book, do with me as you please!" They did hear with attention, and went away apparently

satisfied. The leader of this mob soon afterward became a Methodist.

In the year 1796, Mr. Geake and his brother began preaching at Trehunist, in the parish of Quethiock, where they were opposed by a mob, who pelted them with putrid eggs, &c., and manifested the most determined hostility. The two brothers persisted in their work, and, when molested, summoned the offenders before the magistrates, and, although with the most manifest reluctance, their worships were compelled, by the force of evidence, and the express terms of the law, to convict the offenders. But the *animus* of the bench is clearly apparent, from the following conversation, immediately after the conviction. "As Mr. Geake was retiring from the room, one of the magistrates called out, 'Geake, I am informed that you pretend to inspiration; but I tell you that inspiration has ceased since the days of the apostles. And you also say, that you are sent of God to preach the Gospel. Now, remember, if I ever hear that you pretend to inspiration again, or that you profess to be sent of God to preach the Gospel, I will send you to jail for six months for the first offence; and for the second, I will transport you for seven years; for I am a quorum.' But this gentleman was not aware of the character with whom he had to deal. Mr. Geake replied, 'You need be at no trouble to collect information; for I will make a confession before you, that I believe God hath inspired me by His Holy Spirit, and hath sent me to preach the Gospel. Now, Sir, make out my *mittimus*, and send me to jail.' The utmost confusion and mortification now became visible in the magistrate's countenance, which he endeavoured to conceal by spreading a book before him. The bench was then referred to the solemn affirmation made by clergymen on the subject. After Mr. Geake and his friends had

retired, the defendant and his associates expressed their disappointment at not being at liberty to annoy the Methodist preachers; when it was replied, 'Would to God we could suppress them! but the law is on their side.'"* Although harassed and persecuted in his person and his business, Mr. Geake and his fellow-labourers held on their way, and were largely instrumental in diffusing the knowledge of the Gospel through a previously neglected and destitute district.

Dr. Coke again visits America.

Soon after the Conference of 1796, Dr. Coke made another voyage to America. He sailed from Gravesend on the sixth of August, and soon found that, although he had paid a heavy sum for his passage, he had fallen into very bad hands. The accommodation was of the worst description, and the conduct of the captain extremely depraved and brutal. After a very unpleasant passage, they got sight of the American coast on the 3rd of October, and in a few days were safe on shore. Here the Doctor pursued his usual course of preaching, travelling, and attending Conferences, and was received with great affection and respect, by preachers and people, wherever he went. The heartiness of this reception contrasted strongly with the coldness and suspicion with which many persons in England had regarded him, on account of his zeal and the activity displayed in many of the troubles through which the Connexion was called to pass. When he considered this, and remembered the clouds which still lowered over Methodism in England, his heart yearned to make his home in America. When this feeling became known, it was received with delight, and an arrangement made between him and the General American Conference, (which met that year,) that he should return to England for the settlement

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1838, p. 567.

of his affairs, and come back to make his permanent residence in America; unless, in compliance with any request that might be made, the American Conference should voluntarily consent for him to withdraw from his engagement.

The Conference of 1797.

The Conference of 1797 was held at Leeds, and began on the 1st of August. Thomas Taylor was appointed president, and Samuel Bradburn secretary. The number of Circuits was increased from one hundred and forty-three to one hundred and forty-five.* Never had the Methodist preachers entered on the work of their annual assembly under circumstances of so much difficulty and danger to the Connexion. The first business was a careful revision of the established rules of the Connexion. Mr. Pawson had revised the Large Minutes, omitting what, in his judgment, had become obsolete, and adding such regulations as had been subsequently enacted. This amended form was read to the Conference, then fully considered paragraph by paragraph; and, when the whole was finally settled, it was signed by every preacher present, except one, who withdrew, and joined Mr. Kilham.

As various unfavourable reports as to the Methodistic soundness of the junior preachers had been plentifully circulated, they held a separate meeting, in which, after mature deliberation, the following Declaration was adopted and signed by ninety-seven young ministers.

Declaration of the junior preachers.

"VARIOUS unkind reflections having been thrown out, in certain publications, concerning such of the senior

* In the British dominions in America the number of preachers was reduced from thirteen to eight. In the West Indies the number remained fourteen, as last year.

preachers as are said to direct and manage our Connexion, as if they were 'tyrants and oppressors,' and the other preachers but mere 'cyphers,' we, whose names are underwritten, think it our duty to repel such reflections by declaring that, instead of considering our senior brethren in the light of 'tyrants and oppressors,' we feel ourselves under great obligations to them for their extraordinary labour and fatigue in the service of the Conference. We are satisfied that their piety, abilities, faithfulness, diligence, usefulness, and long continuance in the work of the ministry, entitle them to the respect and esteem of the whole Connexion: and though we are taught by our Saviour to 'call no man master upon earth,' yet, regarding them as our fathers, we conceive it our duty to hear them speak in our Conferences, with that deference which is due to their age and character, especially as we are persuaded they have greatly contributed to keep the Body one in the Lord. We should think it an honour to wash their feet; and our desire and prayer is, to follow them as they have followed Christ."*

* After the signatures was the following statement:—"A certain person has informed the public, in print, that 'the junior preachers were required to sign the above Declaration, or quit the Connexion,' and has made plausible comments upon the circumstance, on that ground. But the whole Conference know, and especially those who signed it, that this is as absolutely false as anything that ever was published. No person was *required* to sign it; and no man was threatened with expulsion or any thing else, in case he did not sign. Every man was left entirely to his own choice. The junior brethren met by themselves, spoke freely and largely upon the subject, drew up, unanimously agreed to, and cheerfully signed the Declaration, as a *free-will offering* in vindication of the reputation of those who deserve so well of the Methodist Connexion.

"Signed by desire of the junior preachers,

"JONATHAN CROWTHER, *Chairman.*

"*Leeds, August 15th*, 1797."

It is a noteworthy coincidence that the number of ministerial candidates received on trial, and the number of deaths, were precisely the same as last year. GEORGE WADSWORTH, of whom little is known, except that he endured a two-years' painful affliction in humble submission to the Divine will;—SAMUEL HARRIS, "a pious, steady, and promising young man, in the third year of his probation;"—and THOMAS HANBY, who had travelled forty-four years,—all finished their course with joy. The last name occurs too often in our early history, and he who bore it had a station too elevated among the thousands of our Israel, to be summarily dismissed. Born at Barnard-Castle, in 1733, and left an orphan when only seven years old, he was placed under the care of an aunt, and "put to school for some years; and afterwards learnt carpet-weaving.* Alarm of conscience troubled his earliest childhood." He obtained confirmation; but it brought neither peace of mind nor power over sin. Joseph Cheesebrough,—a pious shoemaker converted in Leeds,—now returned to his native place in search of health. Hanby was attracted to the little Society formed by his humble efforts, and "felt sweetly drawn to seek an unknown God." The town was soon after visited by the early preachers, who often preached "with the blood running down their faces" from the blows and missiles of the mob. When Wesley's congregation was dispersed by the fire-engine, Hanby was one of the noble few who defended the Founder of Methodism from the violence of the rabble.

His convictions deepened, and "God continued to draw him with strong desires." In the fields, woods, and barns of that picturesque locality, he spent much time in prayer. "Every place," he says, "was now a closet to my

* Not the trade of a *painter*, as erroneously stated, vol i., p. 324.

mourning soul, who longed for the Day-Star to arise in my poor benighted heart. And it pleased Infinite Mercy, while I was praying in a dark place, greatly terrified for fear I should see the devil, that the Lord set my weary soul at liberty." He spent some months in Newcastle, and returned to tell his fellow-disciples as much as he could remember of all the sermons he heard during his stay. When his store of information was exhausted, he visited Leeds, that he might receive spiritual refreshment, and carry back instruction and comfort to the little flock. Here, however, after a severe mental conflict, he commenced preaching. In 1754, he went to "assist brother Mitchell in the Staffordshire Circuit." "In weariness and painfulness; in hunger and thirst; in joy and sorrow; in weakness and trembling, were" his "days now spent." The bitter draughts of the wormwood and gall of persecution, of which the noble men who preached the Gospel in his native town so deeply drank, were now pressed to his own lips; and but for the one imperial conviction of a divine call, he would gladly have "embraced the life of a shoeblack, or a shepherd's boy." The following Conference he was received into the ministry, and appointed to Canterbury. As he approached that ancient city, two men with pistols robbed him of his watch and two-and-eightpence,—all the money he had. A rough beginning truly!

With far more than average pulpit qualifications, a piety deep and intelligent, a character spotlessly consistent, and an untiring industry, he soon became one of the prominent men of the Connexion. After Wesley's death he took an active part in the settlement of our ecclesiastical polity. He was the fourth minister elected to the presidency, and, at the time of his death, the oldest preacher in the Connexion. At six o'clock in the morning of Christmas-day, 1796, he ex-

pounded part of the second chapter of St. Luke's Gospel at Nottingham; preached in the forenoon, and again in the evening; and met four or five classes during the day. He closed the services feeble and unwell; the next morning found him worse; and in a few days life gradually ebbed away. He finished a long and useful career with, "I am departing: but I have fought the good fight!" He was the first president called away from among his brethren, after the death of Wesley.

Concession of the Conference.

The great business of this Conference was the revision of Methodist discipline. Several rules, and "Sundry Miscellaneous Regulations," were enacted, and afterward embodied in a circular letter, and sent to the Societies, signed by the president and secretary, under date, "August 7th, 1797."* These concessions were warmly opposed by Henry Moore, who regarded them as a serious inroad on the constitution left by Wesley. He greatly feared they would offer serious obstruction to the proper government of the Societies, and tend to introduce a local and worldly spirit into the discipline. So strongly, indeed, was he influenced by these objections, that, when the new rules were passed, he felt disposed to leave the Connexion. Large-minded and liberal minister as he was, he could not satisfy his conscience without recording his deliberate judgment of this measure in the following terms:—"The strangest thing which ever occurred among a body of men has now occurred in the Methodist Conference: they have conceded by one act all their authority, thereby violating Mr. Wesley's wish and intentions in reference to the work." †

Opposition of Mr. H. Moore.

These regulations settled the disciplinary economy of Methodism. We do not affirm that the code of Methodist law was rendered so complete as to be incapable of further

* See Appendix O. † Mrs. Smith's "Life of Moore," p. 164.

alteration or addition. The nature of the system is such, —its adaptation to meet the changing circumstances of society, and provide for the various religious exigencies of mankind, is so extensive,—that finality in its disciplinary code is neither to be expected nor desired. The clearly defined providential path of Methodism is to pursue with undeviating fidelity its great object of spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land, and, from time to time, to make such changes in its rules, in accordance with the original and essential principles of its constitution, as are judged necessary to promote its more extensive usefulness.

The disciplinary economy of Methodism was so far settled that the essential and original principles were fully recognised and maintained. The integrity of Conference, as consisting only of itinerant preachers, the authority of the pastorate, and the validity of District Committees, were fully established, and recognised as essential elements of the Methodist economy. To guard against all improper exercise of authority, to adapt the action of these elements in the fullest degree to the great object for which the Connexion was formed, the various arrangements and regulations now propounded were devised. These regulations could be altered or extended, as circumstances might require; but the three essential institutes above mentioned were made unchangeable and perpetual, and incapable of alteration except by an entire revolution of the whole system.

New Connexion inaugurated.

Mr. Kilham, and those who shared his opinions, inaugurated the New Connexion on the democratic basis which he had so long advocated. Looking away from all the antecedents of the case, we cannot feel the slightest objection to this measure. Methodism, in its evangelical and itinerant operation, had done immense good, and was adapted to

exercise the most potent and lasting influence on the religious condition of the country and the world. Among the persons brought to God through its instrumentality, there was a very small minority, endowed with considerable abilities for extensive usefulness, who entertained views altogether different from those of their brethren respecting some essential elements of Methodism. They did what in these circumstances they had a perfect right to do,—left the Connexion, and founded another on their own principles. The result was to maintain an unabated aggression on the spiritual darkness and wickedness of the country; and, at the same time, to afford a home, and sphere of usefulness, for those who entertained similar views respecting the constitution of the church, and the exercise of Christian discipline. Henceforth there could be no reason for the slightest objection to the principles of the original Methodists; for, whoever desired a nearer approach to democracy in church discipline, could find it ready to their hand in the New Connexion. And the future progress of the two bodies would test, not, indeed, their relative scriptural character, but the extent to which the Methodist people of this country entertained the respective views of the two denominations.

Besides Mr. Kilham, who was expelled, five Methodist preachers left the Conference, and joined him in the formation of the New Connexion:—William Thom, who bore a very respectable character as a man of sense, piety, and learning, and had travelled twenty-three years;—Alexander Cumming;—Stephen Eversfield, who ultimately became an Independent minister;—Michael Emmett, who came back before the Conference was over, saying, "My intention was pure in going away. I thought I could promote the work of God more with them than

with the old Connexion; but I am convinced there is little of God among them;"—and Henry Taylor, who, after several days' deep distress, also returned to the Conference, "convinced of his error in leaving us, and deeply humbled before God and man." He said, "It is one thing to read men's writings, and another to see them act." *

Dr. Whitehead restored to the Society.

One of the events of Methodist history this year was the restoration of Dr. Whitehead as a member and local preacher. After the irritation caused by the publication of the Doctor's Life of Wesley had passed away, the trustees of City Road looked upon him with favour, and felt strongly disposed to allow him to preach in the chapel. Mr. Pawson, Superintendent of the London Circuit, was much inclined to promote their object and to meet Dr. Whitehead's wishes by giving him a Society ticket, and proposed to insert his name on the Plan. It had been suggested, that before his restoration he should make some acknowledgment of the impropriety of his conduct in respect of Wesley's papers, and his Life of Wesley; and on these terms the Leaders', Quarterly, and Local Preachers' Meetings had agreed to his restoration. Unfortunately by none of these meetings were the terms of the proposed acknowledgment, or even its character or extent, specified. But in the course of the week ending October 21st, 1797, Adam Clarke, then one of the London preachers, learned that the City Road trustees had resolved that the Doctor should preach in the chapel on the Sabbath; and that in the draught of the New Plan Mr. Pawson had actually placed his name at the head of the list of local preachers. At the Preachers' Meeting on the Saturday, Clarke earnestly objected to this course. He spoke of Dr. Whitehead's conduct in relation to Wesley's papers and

* Rev. Joseph Entwisle's Journal, Memoir, p. 157.

Life, and argued that he had done much injury to Methodism by the assistance he had given to Mr. Kilham. He concluded by moving that Dr. Whitehead "should not be restored to a place among us on the Plan, nor preach in any of our chapels, until after the approaching Conference, unless he made an adequate acknowledgment." Much against the wishes of Pawson, who was supported by Dr. Coke, this resolution was carried. Dr. Whitehead's name did not appear on the Plan; but, by the authority of the trustees, and with the consent of Mr. Pawson, he did preach in City Road chapel the following day. Mr. Pawson probably thought, as the trustees were determined to secure this object, that it had better be done with the concurrence of the superintendent, than in defiance of his authority.

Touching incident in the case of Adam Clarke

While Adam Clarke was, almost alone, resisting this measure, he performed an act of heroism which was very noble, although, in all probability, equally unnecessary. When it was found that his father, who had been appointed master of Kingswood School, was not suited to the situation, he received fifty pounds as a consideration for his leaving unexpectedly, and to enable him to remove. During this painful discussion about Dr. Whitehead's restoration, when Clarke's opposition to the measure was so earnest, after it had been found that he was quite proof against what he calls "flattery," it was hinted that his father had been a great expense to the Connexion, and that, if he persisted in his opposition, the fact might be mentioned in such a manner as would be painful to his feelings. His noble, independent soul rose in strong resistance. He immediately sold the best of his books and philosophical instruments, (which he describes as parting with his "heart's blood,") and paid down the fifty pounds to

the credit of the Kingswood School Fund; proving that he was determined, at any cost, to follow the decision of his judgment, and the dictates of his conscience. This is a fine proof of Adam Clarke's sensitive delicacy and elevated nobility. It also shows in a painful manner the extent to which the undue earnestness of good men, under the influence of human frailty, may inflict suffering and injury on each other.

Mr. Pawson, and Wesley's manuscripts.

Mr. Pawson was a very good man, and a useful preacher; but, beyond the study of divinity, his literary taste was of a very humble character. When Dr. Whitehead returned the papers and manuscripts, which he had so long retained in his possession, to the book steward, Mr. George Storey, they were deposited in the superintendent's house, in the custody of Mr. Pawson. He, no doubt with the best intentions, took upon himself to examine these papers, and to destroy what he thought useless. By this rash procedure, many documents of great interest were irrecoverably lost. Indeed, this Gothic spirit did not find sufficient gratification in burning manuscripts. There was a fine quarto copy of Shakspeare, presented to Wesley by a gentleman of Dublin. The margin was filled with critical notes by Wesley's own hand. Mr. Pawson, regarding this book as among the things which tend not to edification, destroyed it. When Mr. Moore at Bristol heard of this progressive destruction, he instantly demanded the papers, as Wesley's trustee,—a course which saved the remainder.

Results of the agitation.

The ordinary operations of Methodism were, in most of the larger Societies, more or less embarrassed by the prevalent agitation. The Society in Nottingham was much distracted, and great fears were entertained respecting it; but the issue, although resulting in the loss of half the members, was more favourable than had been anticipated.

At Halifax, Mr. Kilham was allowed to preach in the Methodist chapel soon after his expulsion, and also at Greetland. Early in 1797, a committee of local preachers, stewards, trustees, and leaders, was called together for the purpose of drawing up an address containing their views on the current topics of the day. This was published in Kilham's "Methodist Monitor." Mr. Thom was superintendent here from 1796 to 1797, when he seceded and joined Mr. Kilham, and became the pastor of the New Connexion Society at Halifax. The appointment of Thomas Taylor to be the superintendent, in 1797, did much to counteract the effect of this influence. Twenty years before he had travelled in the Circuit, and greatly assisted them in building the chapel; and many were ashamed to turn their backs on their old friend. The country parts suffered greatly, especially Illingworth and Bradshaw. The political disquiet had led to the formation of a reading club and debating society, in which the works of Paine and kindred writers were read, and made the subjects of conversation. Strange as it may appear, some members of the Methodist congregations, and even of the Society, frequented these meetings. In a kindred spirit, Mr. Kilham's writings were taken to the Methodist Class, and, as soon as the regular meeting was concluded, were read, and not unfrequently became the subject of angry discussion for an hour. The result was just what might have been expected. The major part of the Society at Bradshaw determined to eject their lawfully appointed minister from the chapel. To make this more significant, the day selected for the outrage was the one when Mr. Taylor was himself appointed to preach, although he was the man who had been mainly instrumental in placing the chapel in comfortable circumstances, and had

travelled scores of miles over the hills for that purpose. When Mr. Taylor reached the place, the chapel-keeper, who usually took charge of his horse, refused to touch the animal. At the door one of the ringleaders endeavoured to prevent his entering, but failed. He found the pulpit occupied by a man to whom he had given his note of admission to the Society, and whose spiritual interests he had fostered and watched over in the Lord. The pulpit stairs were filled with men who rudely repulsed the aged minister; while the congregation, forgetting the respect due to a place of worship, shouted, "Turn him out." The venerable preacher, seeing it in vain to persist, left the chapel with tears in his eyes, hissed and hooted on every side. A few of his congregation, who had sense and feeling enough to be disgusted with the outrage, followed him to a barn, offered as a preaching-place. On opening the Bible, his eye rested on the words, "The Lord will provide;" and on this passage, as a text appointed by Heaven, he preached. He was so blessed, that, forgetting the injury and indignity he had suffered, and full of grateful love, he exclaimed, "Bless the Lord! I remember the time when at Bradshaw we had no place to preach in, the heavens alone were our canopy; but now a good barn is afforded us in which to assemble." The chapel was not only unrighteously wrested from its owners, but retained. Only one leader, James Smith, one influential member, David Clayton, and thirteen private members remained, to begin anew the Methodist cause at Bradshaw.

At Huddersfield, the trustees closed the chapel against their own preachers, and received Mr. Kilham, Mr. Thom, and their helpers; and a large part of the Society seceded. Leeds was much agitated by those fierce contentions, and

serious consequences were apprehended; but the temperate and judicious conduct of Mr. Benson, in the early part of the year, prevented any great defection. Sheffield Manchester, Liverpool, and indeed the Societies generally, were more or less affected by this fatal strife; so that the for mation of the New Connexion, which, in itself, might have been right and proper, by its agitating and divisive influences, became the means of incalculable mischief. The temptations to agitation and division were, indeed, sometimes repelled by men prepared to sacrifice the gains of business or the society of friends, rather than minister to the distraction and division of the church. Two of the seceding ministers waited on Mr. Joseph Gee, of Hull, to induce him to join their party. He stopped them short, saying, "I know your errand; you design to divide the Lord's heritage; and I for one dare not bid you God speed, or give you the right hand of fellowship. On the contrary, my prayer is, that He would turn your counsel into foolishness."* Notwithstanding all these difficulties and opposition, Methodism was neither destroyed nor diminished. Assailed by former friends, opposed by open foes, yet firmly bearing up, it continued to expand and increase.

A curious incident occurred during this year,—one which, although it seems, at first sight, to afford evidence of mental aberration, can scarcely be regarded in any other aspect than as an illustration of the intense enmity of the carnal mind to the way of righteousness and the people of God. A poor and pious man, a native of Prescot in Lancashire, was working at the mouth of a coal-pit near Oriel, in the same county. By an incautious step, he fell to the bottom of the pit, sixty-two yards. Yet so wonderfully did the

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1836, p. 495.

providence of God preserve him, that he sustained no injury. When informed of the circumstance, his master instantly discharged him from his employ, declaring that "the man had purposely fallen into the pit, in order that the Methodists might have something to clamour and preach about!"

Progress of the work at Southampton.

The gradual progress of the work of God at Southampton encouraged the Society to erect a chapel. It must have been a small and humble edifice; for the contract was taken by Messrs. Roe and Bartlett, to purchase the ground and build a chapel and dwelling-house for the sum of three hundred and sixteen guineas. Yet this erection was regarded as sufficient to justify a division of the Portsmouth Circuit, and make Southampton a Circuit town.

Remarkable illustration of spiritual religion.

In the prosecution of a work like this, it is not very difficult to collect and arrange prominent facts and remarkable events; and these must necessarily form the visible substantial materials of the history. But it is equally necessary to keep under the distinct notice of the reader illustrations of the nature and power of that inward and spiritual life from which all this outward progress, increase, and development proceed. The following incidents will illustrate our meaning. Thomas Tatham, of Nottingham, was converted to God and joined the Methodist Society in 1782. He became a leader and local preacher, and was convinced of the necessity of a deeper work of grace, and struggling after it. In October, 1797, while he was handing round the cake in the quarterly lovefeast, an old woman out of Derbyshire arose, and said, "The Lord have mercy upon you; for you are the deadest souls I ever met in all my life! God be merciful unto you!" Mr. Tatham was offended, and said within himself, "Who made thee to be a judge over us?" Just then

a soldier in complete uniform entered the room, and spoke with considerable power. No sooner had he uttered a few sentences, than Mr. Tatham, who at first thought him prompted by vanity, felt their unction. "His word," he says, "thrilled through the congregation like an electric shock; and I felt it to penetrate my sinful heart in a wonderful manner." In the evening, he was glad to meet the soldier at a prayer-meeting, where he delivered a short exhortation, and prayed with much hallowed pathos and energy. This soldier, whose behaviour had so won the regard of the officers, that they allowed him every reasonable opportunity to meet with his Christian friends, was trumpet-major in the Third Regiment of Dragoon Guards. The next Sunday he met Mr. Tatham's Class, and "his word was like fire. It penetrated every heart, and tears ran down almost every face. He left me," he says, "to finish the Class, which I knew no more how to do than if I had never met one in my life. Under a deep conviction of my want of grace, I stood confounded before the people, and ready to fall to the ground, and frankly confessed my unfaithfulness and inability to lead them. I had scarcely made this acknowledgment before the Lord visited me in mercy, and I felt such an overwhelming sense of His love as enabled me to speak with the same power the soldier had done, and with the same effect." The next morning, at family worship, while reading the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, "I felt, through the agency of the same Spirit," says Mr. Tatham, "an extraordinary work wrought upon my own heart, which so overpowered me, that it was with the utmost difficulty I got through the chapter. On approaching the Lord by prayer,

> 'My tongue broke out in unknown strains,
> And sung surprising grace.'

For, such thanksgiving, accompanied with agonizing intercession for others, was I led to utter, as filled all around with astonishment."

Mr. Tatham remained exceedingly happy all the day, and in the evening had it deeply impressed on his mind to speak of his improved state of feeling to the leaders on the following night, and to exhort them to a closer walk with God. When the time arrived, although he had felt unspeakably happy under the sermon, he had no sooner entered on the business of the Leaders' Meeting than his comfort was withdrawn, and he was enveloped in such a cloud of darkness as no language can describe. In this state of feeling, it was strongly suggested to his mind not to carry out his purpose. Again, he thought, as he had mentioned his design to one of the leaders, he ought to do so. When two of the brethren were about to leave, he requested them to stay. Having finished his business as steward, he spoke of what God had done for him. No sooner had he begun, than the presence and power of God filled his soul. He adverted to their deficiency as leaders of the people, and urged deeper spirituality and firmer fidelity to the work of God. His brother steward, Mr. Joseph Woodhouse, attempted to speak, but was overcome by a flood of emotion. "I then exhorted every one who felt hungering and thirsting after God," says Mr. Tatham, "to engage in prayer. Mr. Bardsley prayed first; and, as he concluded, the Spirit of the Most High came upon me in such a manner as it is impossible to express. I saw and felt it as evidently, in a spiritual sense, as ever I saw the heavens open, and lightning fall upon the earth. Under this visitation I was humbled as in the dust, emptied of self, and so filled with God, that I fell into an agony of prayer; and although,

heretofore, I had ever been an avowed enemy to loud praying,—so much so, that only on the Sunday morning but one before this, on my way to the prayer-meeting at seven in the morning, when in Woolpack Lane I heard a brother praying very loud, I was so disgusted at him that I could scarce bear it. But O how ignorant was I of the operations of the Holy Spirit! God indeed showed me so that morning. For now I was so far carried out of myself by the power of God in agonizing prayer, for twenty minutes, that I could not restrain my voice, but prayed so loud that, had I been in the open air, I believe I might have been heard to the distance of half a mile.

"There were eleven leaders present, who were melted down into tears. They sobbed and cried like children. After I had done, they broke out in such a general confession of sins, as would have melted a heart of stone to hear them; and continued in the deepest humiliation of soul, confessing and bewailing their sins, sometimes three or four together, and sometimes nearly all, until eleven o'clock. Such a breaking down, and such a rising up, we never before witnessed. On rising from our knees, every countenance beamed with joy, every tongue broke forth in praise, and every heart was so filled with the love of Christ, that we were ready to embrace each other. Brother Woodward rejoiced and praised God that I had prevented him from going out, and was so happy all the next day that he could not attend to business. With regard to myself, the Spirit of God rested so powerfully upon me, and my strength was thereby so greatly exhausted, that I was obliged to be supported by two friends on my way home." * The effects of this spiritual baptism on the Society were of the happiest description, until it was rent in twain by the

* Dunn's "Memoirs of Tatham," p. 70.

prevalent agitation, and rather more than half their number joined the New Connexion.

Fearful consequences of the rebellion in Ireland.

In Ireland the Methodists, and especially the preachers, were exposed to eminent peril. Toward the close of 1797, and throughout all the early part of 1798, that country was the scene of continued political excitement, violence, and blood. The following extract, written by a supernumerary preacher, gives a fair description of the state of the country generally: "We never saw a time in which it was more necessary to live in God than at the present. Most of the other sect are thirsting for their neighbours' blood. This thirst is wonderfully increasing and spreading through all parties, insomuch that it is hard remaining still in any posture but on our knees. There is not a night that we are not in apprehension of being attacked by murderers. The Protestants on my ground assemble in my house every night for protection; and God has hitherto preserved us, though we are the only little body in the country who have not arranged themselves in any military corps, being determined to trust God with our souls and bodies, believing that Jesus will save to the uttermost all who come to the Father through Him. It is a time of trial, but it is a time of great support to faithful souls; for we find grace equal to our day: and if we are not full of God, the fault is our own; for Heaven is on our side. . Our little company is like the Israelites in the wilderness, surrounded by warlike and inimical nations; yet we are perfectly safe, and rest in peace. Pray for us, that we may hold out to the end, without sullying our garments with the filth of distrust or ungodly fear. I had a very happy tour of four months. The church of God I found rather in a fixed mourning state than otherwise, save

in Sligo, and Belfast, where the work of God is sweetly progressive."

Dr. Coke, and his relation to America.

At the Conference of 1797 it was whispered that Dr. Coke intended leaving England for a permanent residence in America. The report produced a great impression upon the preachers. They saw in him the spirit of missionary enterprise, a perfect knowledge of the details of the work, and a quenchless zeal altogether marvellous. Clearly perceiving that the Methodism of England needed such a man, and ought to retain him, they entreated the Doctor to relinquish his purpose. The request was urged with so many proofs of their respect and affection, that he consented to negotiate with the American Conference for an honourable release from his engagement. With this object in view he again went to America, taking an address from the English Conference, requesting the American brethren to cancel the obligation under which he had placed himself. As the General American Conference did not meet this year, no formal release could be given to the Doctor; but Mr. Asbury, who presided at the Virginia Conference, consented to his retiring from America for a season. This arrangement the General Conference confirmed, but still held Dr. Coke to his engagement; so that if urgent circumstances required it, he should be bound to reside among them.

The Conference of 1798.

The Conference of 1798 assembled at Bristol, when Joseph Benson was appointed president, and Samuel Bradburn secretary. The Circuits increased from one hundred and forty-five to one hundred and forty-nine.*

* Higham Ferrers, Jersey, Inverness, and Longford, having ceased to be numbered as Circuits, while Wetherby, Howden, Berwick, Ayr, Longford, Boyle, Southampton, and Kettering are found in the list.

The members under the care of the Conference were, 101,682, showing an increase of 2,163. In Ireland there was a decrease of three hundred and forty-seven. The cause of this is pathetically set forth in the Irish Address to the English Conference, dated, "Dublin, July 20th, 1798:"

Pathetic Address of the Irish Conference.

—"Though the troubles of our nation, when we last addressed you, were sufficiently alarming, they were only the beginning of sorrows. Never did we expect to see so awful a day as we now behold! The scenes of carnage and desolation which open to our view in every part of the land, are truly affecting; and, while we drop the tear of commiseration over our unhappy country, and our deluded countrymen in arms against the best of sovereigns and the happiest constitution in the world, we cannot help crying, 'O God, shorten the day of our calamity, or no flesh can be saved!'

"To attempt a description of our deplorable state would be vain indeed. Suffice it to say, that loss of trade, breach of confidence, fear of assassination, towns burned, countries laid waste, houses for miles without an inhabitant, and the air tainted with the stench of thousands of carcasses already cut off, form some outline of the melancholy picture of our times. However, in the midst of this national confusion, we and our people in general, blessed be God, have been wonderfully preserved: though some of us were imprisoned for weeks by the rebels, exposed also to fire and sword in the heat of battle, and carried (surrounded by hundreds of pikes) into the enemies' camp, and plundered of almost every valuable, yet we have not suffered the least injury in our persons! And moreover, God, even our own God, has brought us through all, to see and embrace each other in this favoured city.....Our Conference was not only held without molestation, but by permission of his excellency

the lord lieutenant. Under God we owe this permission to the exertions of our worthy president, Dr. Coke, who, upon hearing of our danger and distress, flew on the wings of love, from your land of safety and happiness, to partake of our sufferings, and to help us on the way to heaven. We feel ourselves highly obliged to him, and our hearts are knit to him in love.....But while we bless God for our preservation, we have to lament that on the Carlow and Wicklow Circuits, and several others, many Societies have been scattered, and many of our people left without a place to lay their heads. This may, in some measure, account for the diminution of numbers this year; yet we bless God that in other parts of the kingdom there has been an ingathering of souls, as well as a deepening of His work in the hearts of His people." * To this address the English Conference returned a very able, touching, and eloquent reply.

There was again a goodly supply of twenty-six candidates for the ministry, among whom we recognise the name of Edward Hare. Three desisted from travelling; and four were taken to their reward, all of whom had borne "the burden and heat of the day." JASPER ROBINSON, born near High Wycombe, obtained the forgiveness of sins in Leeds, while hearing Wesley preach, and entered the ministry in 1776. For twenty-three years, "his unaffected simplicity of manners, his steady and upright conduct, his mild and gentle spirit, never failed to gain the affectionate regard of all who knew him." "The Lord compasses me about with mercies:—He makes all my bed in my sickness:—I have no uneasiness respecting my soul," were among his last utterances. His exhausted frame sank to rest in the seventy-third year of his age.

* Minutes, vol. i., p. 412.

Thomas Briscoe, a "sensible, well-read man, and by no means a weak preacher," was a martyr to "damp beds." After a thirty years' ministry, much of it a time of feebleness and terrible suffering, he died calm, hopeful, and happy.

William Hunter, a native of Northumberland, felt many "sweet drawings of love," and delighted much in the law of the Lord, during his childhood. He heard Christopher Hopper, and experienced a great change; but, rallied by his companions on being a Methodist, he relapsed into his old carelessness and sin. Re-awakened, he sought God's salvation, and fearlessly joined the Society. Jacob Rowel recommended him to the London Conference of 1767, and he was appointed to Barnard Castle. In these lovely old Dales, where Methodism so early gained firm footing, he toiled hard, often amid persecution and mobs. Wherever he went, he witnessed a good degree of prosperity among the churches. Slow of speech, but weighty in expression and serious in deportment, heavenly wisdom dropped from his lips, and found its way to the hearts of his hearers. His private intercourse with his flock was eminently edifying. After thirty years' hard toil, at the "good old age" of seventy-three, his last end arrived. Many of his dying sayings glitter as "apples of gold in pictures of silver." "I am a rich monument of God's mercy." "Sleeping or waking, all is well." "When will my Lord come?" "Tell the preachers, I have never varied from the Methodist doctrine or discipline, from my first setting out." "Precious Christ! precious Jesus! What a sight is this!—a poor unworthy creature dying full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost." "O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"

Thomas Johnson, born at Wakefield in 1720, was early left to the sole care of a mother, who kept him in the

house on the Lord's day after the morning service, and made him read the chapter from which the text was taken, the Lessons and Psalms for the day, and some portion of A Kempis's "Christian Pattern." Under these sacred influences, his youthful mind was seriously impressed. During his apprenticeship, the good seed was choked by trifling company, the card table, the dance, and other evil amusements. In 1748, chiefly through the conversation of a devout woman, he was brought to a knowledge of salvation. He entered the ministry in 1752; became a supernumerary at Bristol, in 1784; and died in 1797. "It is finished! It is finished!" he exclaimed, just as he was departing. "Christ is precious. He is all in all. There is no other foundation, and I want no other. He is all-sufficient; God over all. I am fixed upon the Rock,—THE ROCK OF AGES!"

Dr. Coke's project for having some preachers episcopally ordained. Its failure.

Although the Methodist Conference had decided on pursuing the course which had been providentially opened before them, and regarded their polity as established, Dr. Coke, who fully agreed with all the concessions which had been made, was not satisfied with their operation in respect of the Lord's Supper. If nothing could be done to afford the Methodist Societies the administration of the sacraments by religious men in connexion with the Church of England, he fully believed their own preachers should administer them; but he saw, from the rapid progress of this practice, that it would issue, at no distant time, in alienating the Methodists altogether from the services of the Church,—a result which he greatly deprecated. Pressed by these considerations, he laboured to devise some plan for meeting the case. The solution which appeared to him most likely to succeed, was to have a given number of the preachers, proposed by the Conference, episcopally

ordained, with liberty to travel through the Connexion, and administer the sacraments to the Societies. He submitted the subject to the attorney-general, whom he had known at Oxford, and who approved of the proposal. The doctor then formally brought it under the notice of the Bishop of London. He informed the prelate that "a very considerable part of our Society have imbibed a deep prejudice against receiving the Lord's Supper from the hands of immoral clergymen;" and observed that "the word 'immoral' they consider in a very extensive sense, as including all those who frequent card-tables, balls, horse-racing, theatres, and other places of fashionable amusement." After stating that the Methodist Societies contained about ninety thousand adults, and that the regular hearers amounted to about half a million, he suggested his scheme to his lordship's consideration.

In acknowledging the receipt of the letter, the bishop admitted the importance of the subject, but expressed a doubt whether the proposed means were practicable. He, however, promised to bring the matter under the notice of the two archbishops, and to inform Dr. Coke as soon as anything had been decided on. Two or three weeks afterward, the doctor received a letter from the archbishop of Canterbury, stating that the question had been fully considered, and that the plan was impracticable. After expressing his willingness to meet the case of persons of tender consciences with every possible indulgence, he says, "But that a scruple avowed to be founded on the presumption that all the regularly ordained clergy of the Church of England are immoral, should be given way to, and that the bishops should, on such suggestion, ordain a number of persons upon the recommendation of your general Conference, without any other inquiry as to their

fitness, and without any title or appointment to any place where they might legally exercise their functions; such a proposal, merely for the purpose of supplying congregations which scruple to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at the hands of our ministers, whom they deem unworthy, with pastors whom they more approve, we must think it highly unjustifiable in us to comply with."* Here ended this private effort to unite Methodism more closely with the Church. The Conference had nothing whatever to do with it. The measure was Dr. Coke's own, undertaken on his individual responsibility. Had he succeeded with the bishops, he must have brought it before the Conference; but having failed with them, the whole case was at an end.

The missionaries in British America and Newfoundland remained eight in number, as in the preceding year. But those employed in the West India Islands were increased to twenty-two, being an addition of eight. Dominica, St. Bartholomew, Montego Bay, Providence Island, and Bermuda, as new stations, received missionaries.

Shipwreck and sufferings of W. Jenkins.

William Jenkins, one of these newly appointed men, underwent many dangers in attempting to reach his destination. A native of St. Kevern in Cornwall, this young man was converted to God, and led to offer himself for the Mission work, under rather remarkable circumstances. He embarked at Bristol, in a vessel bound for the West Indies, but which had to touch at Cork. She encountered a dreadful storm, which rendered her unmanageable and drove her on shore, a perfect wreck, on the coast of Ireland, near Kinsale. As soon as the receding tide made it possible, the rude and savage peasantry rushed on board, and began to plunder the ship and passengers.

* Drew's "Life of Dr. Coke," p. 293.

Mr. Jenkins and his companions got on shore, but were exposed to great danger from the violence of the people, until a body of military appeared, to protect them and the property in the wreck. The mob was furious, and four of them were shot before they were dispersed. The case of Mr. Jenkins was most deplorable, he having lost all his property, and retaining scarcely a comfortable suit of clothes. The accommodation in a house near the wreck being wretched, he went to Kinsale, where he was most hospitably entertained by an innkeeper and his wife. Finding they were Roman Catholics, and thinking they might regard him as one of their communion, he frankly told the mistress that he was a Protestant and a Methodist, and that he had no money or other means of making her any remuneration for what he might receive. Her answer was truly generous and noble: "You are a Christian and in distress; therefore whatever I have in my house is at your service; and the only recompense I expect from you is to see that you are comfortable while under my roof." She urged him to call on a kinsman of hers, a Popish priest, who lived near the place of the wreck, and who might induce the people to return some of his property. The priest received him kindly, and promised to do his utmost; but said, "I fear they will pay little attention to my exhortation: I will try, and you can call again, and I will inform you of the result." When he called again, the priest told him he had not succeeded, but would make further efforts. Mr. Jenkins told him he was a Protestant; but that did not diminish the kindness of the priest, who said, "You see my situation; it is far from being an elegant one. I have begun to build this house, but have not yet wherewithal to finish it, but hope to do it next year; a part of it is fitted for my habitation; and I

request you to come and live with me, and we will have all things in common, as the disciples of Christ had shortly after the day of Pentecost. It is true, you and I differ in judgment touching some particular points of doctrine and forms of worship; but we both agree in the most important matters; we both serve the same Master, aim at His glory, and are labouring to save souls from ruin. You are therefore my brother in Christ, and, as such, are entitled to an equal share of all I possess."* We do not wish in any manner to insinuate that such instances of catholic Christian feeling and noble elevation of character, above all merely sectarian partiality and prejudice, are of rare occurrence among Papists; although they evidently exhibit a Christianity decidedly in advance of the doctrines maintained by that church. But that such an instance should be found in Ireland, just at the time of the rebellion, when tens of thousands of their co-religionists had conducted a furious and merciless war against Protestant ascendancy and the professors of the Protestant faith, is a cheering and refreshing fact, on which the mind delights to dwell. With such exhibitions of Christianity before us, how mean and empty the circumstantials of religion appear in comparison of the "faith which worketh by love!"

Mr. Jenkins had written Dr. Coke soon after his shipwreck, and the Doctor immediately sent him a consolatory letter, enclosing a draft for two hundred pounds, to enable him to pursue his voyage without further delay. This affords another proof of Dr. Coke's generous character. No man ever toiled more to secure funds for the Missions to the West Indies. He had begged from door to door through evil report and good report, had given his own money, and borrowed, and used every legitimate

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1819, p. 928.

means. And now, rather than a missionary should be unnecessarily delayed, or suffer inconvenience beyond what was absolutely unavoidable, two hundred pounds were sent to Mr. Jenkins, who was enabled to pay for all his accommodation at Kinsale, to take his passage from Cork, and reach his destination at St. Christopher's, where he safely arrived, and was joyfully received.*

Peculiar adaptation of Methodism for employing all kinds of talent.

In tracing the progress of Methodism from year to year, the mind becomes more than ever impressed with the vast advantage which the Connexion derived from the practice of providing for the godly exercise of every description of talent. When we consider the agency employed in the apostolic church, it cannot be doubted that the great diversity of gifts was munificently given, and very graciously adapted, to promote the spiritual interests of the church, and extend the kingdom of the Redeemer. It has certainly been so in Methodism. Men have sometimes been raised up with abilities so peculiar, that, placed within the strict limits of any ordinary office, they would be so fettered and cramped as to be almost useless; or, at least, not at all so useful as when their energies had full scope for exertion. Fixed in a church, or confined to the usual work of a Circuit preacher, Dr. Coke might have been a good and useful man; but he could never have contributed a tithe of the impetus to the godly action of Christianity which he rendered when employed as he was in Methodism.

Dr. Coke, Samuel Hick, and Gideon Ouseley.

Two other men, differing in almost every respect from each other, were this year rising up into usefulness. Samuel Hick—a village blacksmith of Yorkshire, a man with no learning except the mere art of reading; with little ability beyond a limited measure of common sense, united with some wit, much eccentricity, and great energy; and

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1819, p. 929.

speaking in the broad but abbreviated Yorkshire dialect, so as scarcely to be understood in another district—was very useful in leading sinners to repentance and strengthening believers. He had, indeed, one qualification which must not be overlooked,—he was eminently holy. Though destitute of learning, his eye was single; and his whole body was full of light. It is hardly possible to estimate the fruits of his labours and prayers. Scarcely any denomination but Methodism would have recognised such a man as a local preacher; yet there are few of that class of labourers, however talented or successful, who can approach him in usefulness. Nor was his usefulness confined to those of his own rank in life. Gentlemen, country squires, members of Parliament, even peers of the realm, often heard from his lips the truth of God, delivered in a manner which, from the holy unction with which it was imbued, roused in their minds serious thoughts of God and religion.

Gideon Ouseley moved in a very different sphere, and was in every respect a superior man. His father, John Ouseley, Esq., of Dunmore, Galway, was brother to Major-General Sir Ralph Ouseley, whose name is identified with English history as having run a brilliant military career. Gideon, being the eldest son, was not intended for any profession. He received a superior mathematical and classical education, with his two cousins, Sir William and Sir Gore Ouseley, celebrated for their oriental learning. In his youth, he was an energetic, hard-working scholar. When about twenty-six or twenty-seven, he was much affected with serious thoughts of religion. Soon afterwards the Methodist preachers visited Dunmore, and through their ministrations he became more deeply concerned. In 1791, about two years afterward, he attended a Class-meeting, and was brought under a deep

and agonizing sense of sin, and soon found peace and pardon through the atonement. His piety became eminent, and his zeal for God intense. Called by the Spirit to preach the Gospel, he was very successful in bringing sinners to repentance in his own neighbourhood. At the close of the Methodistic year now under review, we find him preparing to devote himself fully to the Methodist ministry, for the purpose of carrying the Gospel to the most dark and depraved of his countrymen.

Mr. Ouseley would undoubtedly have made a highly respectable minister in any evangelical church. But in no single parish, to no individual congregation, could he have ministered the amount of good, which he dispensed as a Methodist missionary to the native Irish. There was no other church with which he could have connected himself, that could have so effectually co-operated with his exertions, or husbanded the fruits of his labours, as Methodism. To his eminently useful career we shall frequently have to refer.

Revivals in Cornwall and Ireland.

The spring of 1799 witnessed a very gracious spiritual influence poured on several of the Societies in Cornwall. At Penzance, Zennor, Hayle, St. Just, and other places, great numbers were turned "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God."

In the neighbourhood of Bandon, Ireland, there was also a revival of religion. Within the space of about twelve days, not less than two hundred and fifty persons were converted to God; so that "the wilderness became a fruitful field."

The Rev. David Simpson, an eminently pious and useful clergyman, died March 24th, 1799. For twenty-six years he had laboured in the town of Macclesfield, and had been instrumental in the conversion of great numbers of its inhabitants. His preaching was remarkably effective, and

the various works which he published were calculated to spread useful knowledge and true religion. Himself earnestly devoted to the promotion of evangelical godliness, he rejoiced in the success of all who aimed at the same object. Wesley often preached in his church, and the Methodist people held him in the highest esteem. He was indeed a burning and a shining light.

The Conference of 1799 was held in Manchester, and began July twenty-ninth. Samuel Bradburn was president, and Dr. Coke secretary. The obituary record for this year contains the names of three youthful ministerial probationers:—Bartholomew M'Donald, who died after a year's usefulness among the slaves in Antigua;—Charles Martin, a native of Norfolk, received on trial in 1797:—and James Richardson, who landed in Jamaica on Good Friday, preached four times, met a Class once, and in seventeen days was a corpse. Then there are the names of William Thompson, John Murlin, and Thomas Olivers,—three veteran men, of whom some more extended account must be given. The Conference of 1799.

William Thompson was a native of Fermanagh, Ireland. Early converted to God, he entered the Methodist ministry in his twenty-fourth year. A few months afterwards he arrived in England, where he was kindly received by Wesley, and appointed to a Circuit. He bore his full share of the violence which assailed the early Methodists. An unruly mob, instigated by the parson of the parish, once threw him into prison, and carried many of his congregation on board a transport. Thompson was released by the interposition of Lady Huntingdon. His labours in many prominent Circuits of the Connexion were unwearied and successful. But he will be chiefly remembered for the

influence he exerted in the arrangement of our ecclesiastical polity. The "Plan of Pacification," drawn up by his pen, was adopted, with slight alterations, by the Conference. Firm in principle, wise in counsel, close, consecutive, and logical in argument, he was looked up to in times of difficulty and agitation. No wonder that he was the first man elected as Wesley's successor in the presidential chair. His bearing was stiff, and sometimes arbitrary, towards the junior preachers; but he was ever ready to make the *amende honorable*. Jonathan Edmondson, who travelled with him in London, had cause of complaint, and told him his mind without reserve. At first Thompson uttered strong things, then retired; but, says Edmondson, "thinking he had erred, he came to me, gave me a salute, and said, 'Brother Edmondson, forgive me!'" Does not a fact like this mark out William Thompson as a man of unaffected piety and great nobility of mind?

After forty-two years' useful service in the Master's vineyard, increasing infirmities laid him on his last bed, where many precious utterances escaped his lips. "Blessed be God, I have no fear of dying." "I long to depart, that I may be with Christ; but I must wait His time." When free from pain, he often quoted Charles Wesley's remarkable hymn, "On the True Use of Music."

> "Heaven already is begun,
> Open'd in each believer;
> Only believe, and still go on,
> And heaven is yours for ever."

Bradburn preached his funeral sermon from, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" His mortal remains are buried in a vault

in St. Mary's Church, Birmingham, and on the outside wall a plain tablet bears a meagre inscription.

JOHN MURLIN, a wide contrast to William Thompson, was born in Cornwall, 1722, and lived twenty-seven years without religion. When awakened to a consciousness of sin, his agony was intense. The midnight hour often found him wrestling with God, fearing to lie down, "lest he should awake in hell." He "obtained mercy;" and after five years' useful service as a member, class-leader, and local preacher, he entered the ministry, whose duties he discharged for nearly half a century. His natural temperament was painfully sensitive and pathetic. His "head was waters, and" his "eyes fountains of tears." No sooner was he in the pulpit than he wept; and "the Weeping Prophet" was his common designation. This inordinate tendency to tears was no doubt the consequence of nervous excitement. Possessing an independent fortune,—the result of marriage,—he might have retired from the toils of active life; but loving his work, he laboured to the last, often in weariness and pain. He was a man of good sense, and liberal in the distribution of his property.

THOMAS OLIVERS demands a longer notice than our limits allow. Rarely has Methodism hewn from the rock a stone so precious, or gathered a gem so sparkling and beautiful. "This fiery Welshman," as Southey calls him, was born at Tregonan, Montgomeryshire, in 1725. Left an orphan in early childhood, he was placed under the care of a relative, who gave him a common school education, and did his best to bring him up in the fear of God. Fired with a godless ambition to out-do his rivals in profanity, he gained a bad pre-eminence in cursing and blasphemy. He "cursed the wind and the weather; the souls of cows and horses; yea, the very heart's blood of

stones, trees, gates, and doors!" Grown up to man's estate, he roamed at will in idleness and vagabondage, but often suffering the alarming terrors of a guilty conscience.

Having often heard of the "flaming evangelist" and sung songs in his derision, he resolved to hear him in Bristol. The first night he was too late; the second he was three hours too soon. When the service began, he stared about him; but when he saw the tears coursing down many a cheek, he became attentive. "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" was the eloquent orator's text. When Whitefield commenced his sermon, Olivers was an abandoned, blaspheming wretch; ere he finished, he was a new man. A few months afterwards he removed to Bradford, Wilts., and united himself with the Methodist Society. He reproved sin, met a class on the Sabbath morning, and soon desired to "tell the world what God had done for him." Long walks and hard preaching made him so tired on the Sunday night, that he could "hardly get over a stile," or "climb up stairs to ask a blessing on the labours of the day."

Remembering that he was entitled to some property under the will of a relative, he returned to Tregonan. The marvellous change cheered his friends, and brought down many an indignity from the godless, who remembered his former profanity. He bought a horse, and traversed the scenes of his dissipation, offering his creditors satisfaction in full. Returning to Bradford, he intended to enter into business; but "before he was half settled," Wesley sent him into Cornwall. "Not able to buy another horse," he says, "with my boots on my legs, and my saddle-bags, with my books and linen, across my shoulder, I set out in October, 1753." In 1775, Wesley appointed him "corrector of the press." Henceforth he remained in London,

where he died in March, 1799, and was interred in Wesley's own vault.

He was a man of great intellectual and logical powers, indomitable will, and bold, daring spirit. He was well read in English theology, and acquired a respectable knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. A ready and powerful helper in the Calvinian controversy, he wrote several able pamphlets in reply to Toplady and others. His attachment to Wesley and to Methodism was ardent in the extreme. Some idea of his powers as a composer of music may be formed from his fine tune called "Helmsley," written expressly for Charles Wesley's magnificent hymn,—

"Lo, He comes with clouds descending."

His elegy on the death of Wesley; his "Hymn of Praise to Christ;" and, above all, his noble lyric,

"The God of Abraham praise,"

composed to an old Jewish melody, show his high poetic powers. "There is not in our language," says a brother hymnist, "a lyric of more majestic style, more elevated thought, or more glorious beauty.....Like a stately pile of architecture, severe and simple in design, it strikes less on the first view than after deliberate examination, when its proportions become more graceful, its dimensions expand, and the mind itself grows greater in contemplating it." "The man who wrote it must have had the finest ear imaginable: for none but a person of equal musical and poetical taste could have produced the harmony perceptible in the verse."

Among the twenty-nine names of preachers admitted on trial, are two of the highest Methodistic celebrity,—Jabez Bunting and Robert Newton. Of them we will only say that as Methodist ministers they have held a more eminent and

honourable position in the Connexion, than any others since the death of its Founder. Full of years and honours, they have passed to their reward; the former unrivalled for powers of organization and government; and the latter, in the extent of his journeyings, the number of sermons he preached, the amount of money he collected for the support of religious institutions, and the wide range of influence which he exerted from the pulpit and the platform,—without an equal in the more recent history of the Christian church.

Its transactions.

The number of Circuits in the British islands at the close of the Conference was one hundred and fifty-six, an increase of seven.* In the Minutes of this year we find for the first time the appointment of missionaries for Ireland: they were, James M'Quigg, Charles Graham, and Gideon Ouseley. Dr. Coke had hitherto exerted himself largely on behalf of the West India Missions, had raised so considerable a portion of the funds for their support, and had directed their general operations to such an extent, that it required some special declaration to place the strict and true relation of the several parties distinctly before the world. The Missions had also become so important and extensive as to require increased and permanent funds; which formed another reason why their position, and that of all parties concerned, should be clearly defined. Hence the following minute, designed to commend the cause of Missions more deeply to the sympathies of the Methodist people, and to afford them the means of important information respecting their progress. "*Q.* Are there any further directions or regulations in respect to the West India Missions? *A.* 1.

The Missions.

* The following were the changes: Wigan, Spalding, Youghal, ceased to rank as Circuits; and Dover, Framlingham, Truro, Helston, Welshpool, Preston, Todmorden, Louth, Drogheda, and Skibbereen, became Circuits.

We, in the fullest manner, take these Missions under our own care, and consider Dr. Coke as our agent. 2. We agree, that a collection shall be made as soon as possible in all our Sunday congregations in Great Britain for that blessed work. 3. We desire Dr. Coke to draw up a statement of the work of God in the West Indies, with a short address to the people; and to send printed copies of it to all the superintendents." *

The Preachers' Fund.

Henry Moore and Adam Clarke, who were labouring together in Bristol, had during the year devised an entire remodelling of the Preachers' Fund, first formed in 1763. Its original institution was very simple. Each preacher was required to contribute ten shillings *per annum*, and this money was lodged in the hands of three stewards, approved by the majority of the Conference. From the fund thus formed, a yearly allowance was granted, first, to old and sickly preachers; and secondly, for the widows and children of deceased ministers. In 1765, the subscription was made half a guinea, with an entrance fee of a guinea. The capital was not to be reduced below one hundred pounds. Every superannuated preacher was to have at least ten pounds a year: every preacher's widow, once for all, forty pounds: every child left by such preacher, once for all, ten pounds; but not when the widow had received the forty. No preacher was entitled to receive until he had subscribed two guineas, nor any who had allowed his subscription to go four years in arrear. An excluded preacher was to have the money he had subscribed returned. From the year 1781 to 1790, in consequence of the insufficient contributions of the people, a portion of the Preachers' Fund was, contrary to the rules, appropriated to the support of the preachers: this practice was by

* Minutes, vol. ii., p. 27.

special minute forbidden in 1791. Yet, in 1796, it was found that the fund, which should have been £6,000, was no more than £70, the bulk having been expended in discharging the debts owing on Wesley's property, and in carrying on the work before and since his death.

In 1796, the rules were again re-modelled. Each preacher contributed one guinea *per annum;* and, when unable any longer to discharge the duties of the ministry, received one guinea *per* year for every year he had travelled. If a preacher's health failed when he had travelled twelve years, he received twelve guineas a year.

Fully aware that such a sum made no adequate provision, Adam Clarke and Henry Moore exerted themselves to devise a plan which would, at least, approximate to a competent maintenance. The terms were propounded in a meeting of the preachers and leading lay friends, and subsequently approved by the Conference. The basis of the whole scheme was: "That every member of this Society, who is considered as superannuated by the Conference, shall, if he has travelled under the direction of the Conference less than twenty years, receive annually twenty-four guineas. If he has travelled twenty years, and less than twenty-five years, he shall receive thirty guineas. If he has so travelled twenty-five years, and less than thirty years, thirty-five guineas. If he has so travelled thirty and less than thirty-five years, he shall receive annually forty guineas. If he has so travelled thirty-five years or upwards, he shall receive forty-five guineas. The payments to commence from the time the preacher is superannuated, and to be made every six months." Every new member entering this Society was to pay an entrance-fee of ten guineas, and an annual sum of three guineas. By these means some effectual improvement was attempted, although

the result did not equal the benevolent hopes of its projectors.

As the contributions of the preachers were supplemented by subscriptions from among the people, it was also resolved, "That the subscriptions of the travelling preachers shall, in future, be considered as separate from the subscriptions of the people; and the subscriptions of the people shall be considered as forming a fund of charity, which is to be applied only to the superannuated preachers, and the widows of preachers: nevertheless, those who have hitherto received allowances from the fund, shall continue to receive them, notwithstanding this regulation, as a retrospective law would be unjust. The subscriptions of the preachers being their own money, subscribed in general with great difficulty out of their little pittance, shall be distributed among the supernumerary and superannuated preachers and widows, according to strict and impartial rules of justice." *

In several other respects this Conference exercised its administrative power with considerable effect. It took into consideration the applications of several Societies for help toward the erection of chapels. This was generally occasioned by seceders having wrested the chapel in each place from the Society for whose use it was built. Collections were allowed, within certain prescribed limits, for the assistance of nine such cases.

The Book Room.

In the year 1797 many important alterations, most likely without the authority or knowledge of the Conference, had been made in the general Hymn Book. Not only were a number of "additional Hymns" inserted at the end, but many of those in the body of the volume were expunged, and their places filled by others, mostly of a very

* Minutes, vol. ii., p. 22.

inferior quality. The second edition, published by Wesley in 1781, was revised with great care, and ought to have been regarded as a standard edition. The present Conference, thoroughly dissatisfied with the tampering of unauthorized parties, appointed a Committee, consisting of Dr. Coke, George Storey, Adam Clarke, and Henry Moore, "to reduce the large Hymn Book to its primitive simplicity, as published in the second edition, with liberty to add a note now and then to explain a difficult passage for the sake of the unlearned."*

Measures were also taken for keeping the general accounts of the Connexion in a better manner, by the appointment of a treasurer, accountant, and secretary, for the Yearly Collection, the Kingswood School, and the Preachers' Fund, respectively. A Committee was appointed, by ballot, for considering all addresses and public letters sent to the Conference, and drawing up answers to them. Proper minute books were to be kept for recording the business of the respective District Meetings, and to be handed down to the chairmen successively. Wesley's minute against formality in singing, and the use of anthems, which he had incorporated into the Large Minutes, was re-enacted.

The Address of the Irish to the English Conference is peculiarly affecting. Its reference to the terrible scenes of the rebellion is most touching, and the allusion to the first attempt in modern times at preaching the Gospel to the Irish in their own language, is very appropriate. The church was mainly indebted to Dr. Coke for this noble effort to evangelize the scattered peasantry of the sister island. He undertook the onerous task of raising money to defray the expenses of this Mission.

* Minutes, vol. ii., p. 24.

The reply of the English Conference also merits notice: —"Your request concerning Dr. Coke is granted. We consent to his being our representative and your president, should the Lord spare him the ensuing year. He has for seventeen years annually visited our friends in different parts of Ireland; and we have no objection to his continuing this labour of love, which he has undertaken for Christ's sake, and at the desire of his brethren. His service to you in these critical times, under Divine Providence, is cause of rejoicing to us, and we trust he will still be enabled to serve you in the same way." The last sentence of this letter shows the brotherly feeling with which the English preachers regarded them in their troubles: —"We have made up all your deficiencies, though we have been obliged to borrow one thousand pounds to make up our own."

As the General Conference of America would meet in the course of the current year, an Address was sent to them containing an earnest request that Dr. Coke might be released from the obligation under which he had laid himself to reside and labour in America. The essential importance of his personal counsel, support, and supervision to the success of the Missions in the West Indies, and to the newly formed Mission to the native Irish, is the principal reason for urging this request.

The Conference closed with an Address to the Societies. The state of the funds, published with the Minutes for the year, showed a deficiency of nineteen hundred pounds, as the aggregate of the debt which had accrued in the last few years. An earnest appeal was now made for liberality commensurate with the rapid increase and great extent of the work of God.

During the sittings of this Conference, the first public an-

nouncement was made concerning Adam Clarke's Commentary. He sent a printed paper to Mrs. Clarke, with a letter containing Conference intelligence on the fly-leaf. This circular announced that the New Testament was in a state of forwardness for the press, and would be published with all convenient speed. No part, however, actually appeared for more than ten years afterwards.

Progress and position of the Missions.

In compliance with the request of the Conference, Dr. Coke drew up a statement of the progress and present state of the West India Missions. It set forth that "we have been engaged but thirteen years in this blessed work, and yet the Lord has graciously given us about eleven thousand souls, besides those who in that time have been safely lodged in Abraham's bosom. All of these, as far as we, who are no discerners of the heart, can judge, are truly awakened to a knowledge of their fallen state: they have forsaken their outward sins, yea, even the most favourite of all, polygamy, and are earnestly seeking salvation through the blood of the covenant; and a very considerable part of them are happy in the love of God. In the lovefeasts and band-meetings in St. John's in Antigua, Basse Terre in St. Christopher's, Kingston in St. Vincent's, Kingston in Jamaica, &c., I have been charmed with the testimony which the believing Negroes bore for Jesus Christ. One after another, with the utmost order, they gave an account, in their Negro dialect, of the work of grace upon their souls in its different stages, with as much clearness and perspicuity as any believer in Europe: and their own masters confess that they are the best and most faithful servants which they possess.

"We have now two thousand eight hundred in Society in Antigua, above one thousand eight hundred in St. Christopher's, five hundred in Nevis, above three thousand

in Tortola and the other Virgin Islands, one hundred in Dominica, two thousand in St. Vincent's, forty-four in Barbadoes, one hundred and thirty in Grenada, near six hundred in Jamaica, and one hundred and twenty in St. Bartholomew's. All these we are not ashamed to call members of our Society.

"Inclusive of the above, we have between fifty and sixty thousand under instruction, of all of whom we are in hopes that we shall be able in time, through the grace of God, to give a good account. And the Lord has been pleased to raise up about fifty preachers among the Negroes.

"We have also opened a new Mission among the Negroes in Bermuda, of which Mr. Stephenson, our missionary in that island, gives us a pleasing account. Mr. Turton, who has introduced the Gospel into St. Bartholomew's, has been appointed for Providence Island, to which we have had strong and repeated invitations. We are also establishing a mission among the French Negroes in the island of Grenada, one of our French preachers from the island of Jersey having undertaken the arduous task. In short, the success which the Lord has been pleased to give us exceeds our most sanguine expectations, and the prospects before us are of the most pleasing kind." *

Remarkable conversion.

The history of the world, if properly regarded and faithfully reported, would be found full of the gracious interpositions of the Divine Spirit, issuing in the salvation of men obedient to His benign influence. The following well attested case occurred this year. A poor man, Samuel W——, abandoned to sinful practices, and long inured to a course of wickedness, had engaged himself as trumpeter to a set of strolling players. One morning a companion told him that he was greatly tempted to destroy himself.

* "Methodist Magazine," 1800, p. 42.

Samuel laughed at his weakness; but in a few days the wretched man actually put an end to his life. Very soon after, Samuel was violently tempted to commit the same crime. He resisted; but his mind was always in a tempest; he thought Satan was continually urging him to destroy himself as his comrade had done, telling him that he had sinned beyond the hope of mercy, and that the longer he lived the greater would be his condemnation. Harassed for more than a year, he sought the advice of two clergymen and a physician, but found no relief. In this distress, he saw in a dream a minister, who said to him, "I know your troubles, and have come to show you the way to peace with God: follow me." Presently he thought he was conducted into a beautiful garden, where every thing he saw was delightful to his mind. A few weeks after this dream, he came to Truro, saw the Rev. Mr. Walker in the street, and instantly cried out, "That is the very man who appeared to me in my dream! I must go and tell him what my sufferings are." After showing him the sinfulness of sin, and the necessity of repentance, Mr. Walker preached Christ unto him. Samuel was set free from the bondage of Satan: he left his former companions, got another employment, and led a new life,—a life becoming a follower of Jesus Christ.

Richard Watson's first publication.

While Richard Watson, then a young man of nineteen, was the junior preacher in Derby, circumstances occurred which led to the appearance of his first publication. A clergyman in that town had published an "Address to the People called Methodists." Its object was to alienate the public confidence from the Methodist ministry, by attempting to prove that the preachers have no legitimate authority, and that the doctrines which they teach

are erroneous and enthusiastic. The writer contended that there is no regeneration besides that assumed to take place in baptism; that the Methodists lay claim to the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit; that they rob men of innocent pleasures and gratifications, and subject them to needless terrors and alarms; that justification is a very difficult subject, concerning which there have been many clashing opinions among good men; and that people had far better set themselves to discharge the duties of life, than trouble themselves respecting the manner of their justification before God. There was nothing original or strange in this. Every one acquainted with the early history of Methodism knows that these charges and reasonings have been urged and refuted a hundred times: yet, as this pamphlet was extensively and gratuitously circulated, and was calculated to make a very injurious impression, an antidote was deemed desirable, and Mr. Watson was requested to answer it. His reply bore the following title: "An Apology for the Methodists; in a letter to the Rev. J. Hotham, B.A., Rector of St. Werburgh's, Derby; in Answer to a Pamphlet lately circulated among the Inhabitants of Derby, entitled, 'An Address to the People called Methodists.' By Richard Watson, Preacher of the Gospel." A writer, every way qualified to pronounce an opinion, says of this publication, that it was, of course, "vastly inferior to the elegant, argumentative, and finished works, which in subsequent years emanated from his pen; yet it is no discredit to the youth of nineteen. As the author with whom he entered the lists had indulged himself pretty freely in invective and insinuation, and had given himself no trouble to ascertain the sentiments of the people whom he assailed, Mr. Watson treats him with little ceremony, and tells him some truths which we may suppose would not be very

palatable. There are passages in this concise publication of considerable power and acuteness, and which give pleasing indications of future eminence." *

Success of the Irish Mission.

The three Irish missionaries, Gideon Ouseley, James M'Quigg, and Charles Graham, commenced their great work. James M'Quigg, who entered the ministry in 1789, was an eminent Irish scholar, and an able preacher. After some years his health failed under the excessive labours and sufferings to which he was exposed; but he was very honourably employed by the British and Foreign Bible Society, in editing their edition of the Irish Bible. Charles Graham entered the ministry in 1790. These gifted men, well instructed in the doctrines of the Gospel, and full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, prosecuted their missionary labours with a vehemence and ardour worthy the best and purest ages of the church. "They knew no success but conversions, and no applause but tears." New as the project was, few in numbers as they were, God crowned their word with His blessing; and sinners the most ignorant and besotted were turned from Satan to God. So large, indeed, was this success, even in the first twelve months, that at the ensuing Conference another missionary was added to the number.

Fidelity of the instructed Negroes in Tortola.

Brief as had been the operations of the Methodist Missions in the West Indies, and limited as was the number of missionaries employed, their instructions had produced a sensible effect on the Negro slaves, not only in religion and morals, but also in their fidelity to the government, and their general subordination. Some time after the beginning of the war with France, the acting governor of Tortola received intelligence that a French squadron would soon attack the island.

* Jackson's "Life of Richard Watson," p. 43.

With his very small military force, he found himself utterly defenceless, unless he could venture to arm the Negro slaves. This he regarded as exceedingly dangerous. Pressed by the exigency, however, he sent for Mr. Turner, the Methodist missionary, and asked his opinion. Mr. Turner vouched for the fidelity of all connected with the Methodist Society. Confiding in the missionary's judgment, and relying on the influence the religious slaves had over the others, the governor declared himself prepared to adopt the only course likely to preserve the island, if Mr. Turner would accompany them in their military services. At first he considered it an unsuitable position for a Christian minister; but at length, seeing the importance of the case, he consented. The Negroes were armed and trained, as far as circumstances would permit. The French squadron arrived; but, on nearing the shore, they found a much more formidable show of resistance than they had expected. Satisfying themselves with cutting out two vessels lying at anchor in the bay, they retired without making any attempt to land. During the time the Negroes were thus employed, they conducted themselves with perfect order; and when the danger was over, they laid down their arms, and retired to their usual employments.

Its results.

This good conduct of the Negroes in Tortola had considerable effect on the governors of the neighbouring islands. The governor of the Leeward Islands requested the Methodist missionaries in Antigua and St. Christopher's to make a return of all the Negroes in their Societies capable of bearing arms, as he had received satisfactory information of their loyalty and fidelity. A list was made out; and the Negroes were immediately armed and incorporated with the defenders of their respective islands. So impressed was the government with the

salutary influence of the Methodist Missions on the safety of the West India Islands, that early in this year Dr. Coke received a letter from the secretary of the Post Office, informing him that leave was given for the passage of two missionaries, one to Bermuda, and the other to Jamaica, in the packets from Falmouth, "without payment of the king's head money."

Dr. Coke visits America.

Soon after the Conference of 1799, Dr. Coke left England on his eighth voyage across the Atlantic, and spent most of the year in America. He took with him the Address previously noticed, and received a kind, but qualified, response, in which the General Conference of America, on account of his importance to the prosperity of the Irish and West India Missions, consented to "*lend*" the Doctor to their English brethren "for a season," but hoped to see him again in America by the next General Conference, which would be in four years.

George Lowe at Howden.

George Lowe spent this year in the Howden Circuit, and his labours were crowned with great and blessed results. Soon after his arrival, he went to preach in one of the country chapels, when several young men agreed to have some amusement with the new preacher. Arrived at the place, he proceeded with the service, and announced his text: "Now consider this, all ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." (Psalm iv. 22.) From these solemn words he enforced the magnitude of the sin, the severity of the punishment, and the wisdom of a deep and quietly serious consideration of the subject. The young men had waited till the sermon commenced. But the text, and still more the sermon subdued their restlessness and desire for mischief. Several of them were affected unto tears; their ringleader was deeply convinced of sin, and remained to pray. The

Lord "bound up his broken heart;" he joined the Society, and in 1804 entered the ministry. This was John Lancaster, the editor of the Life of Lady Maxwell. This success was only the beginning of good days. A general revival of religion followed; the word of God seemed to be irresistible; sometimes five or six persons were converted under one sermon.*

Prosperity at Nottingham.

Similar blessings were poured on the Society at Nottingham. In the preceding year a new chapel had been built, instead of the one wrested from the Connexion by the seceders; and in that year, under the ministry of Bramwell, Reynolds, and Patterson, the loss by the secession, although above three hundred, was fully repaired. This year a still larger number was added.

Preachers' life in Ireland.

A preacher gives the following graphic account of his vicissitudes in Ireland:—"At Mrs. Tighe's,† we conversed with senators, ministers, and ladies of rank and talent; we were attended by liveried servants, and cheered with the sound of the organ: perhaps in the next place our lodging was on straw, in some outhouse or newly prepared dwelling. Our labours were multiplied and incessant, and we had formidable difficulties to contend with; but they were few and light, compared with the sufferings and privations of our people, who had but recently suffered the loss of their dearest relations by murder and massacre; who had witnessed the burning of their houses, and the destruction of their property; were driven to embrace the rock for a shelter, or wander from place to place, destitute, afflicted, tormented. In attending many of our places we might say, 'Our life was in our hand.'"

Yet, whilst bearing up under such adversities, and instru-

* "Life of the Rev. George Lowe," p. 244.

† The accomplished author of "Psyche."

Threatened persecution averted.

mentally effecting so much good, the men who prosecuted these zealous labours for the evangelization of the country, were not allowed to pursue their way unmolested. The clergy of a district in the diocese of Lincoln published a Report violently aggressive on the Methodist Body, and it was intended to make an application to Parliament for an Act to limit the liberty of preaching and worship. Mr. Benson produced an able reply; but much anxiety was felt respecting the threatened parliamentary action, and especially when it became known that an influential member, Mr. M. Angelo Taylor, had promised to introduce the proposed Bill. Means were taken to give him information on the subject; and when he found he had been misled by misrepresentation, he finally resolved to abandon the measure.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE CONFERENCE OF 1800 TO THAT OF 1805.

The Conference of 1800.

THE London Conference of 1800 began July 28th. James Wood was elected president, and Samuel Bradburn secretary. The obituary list contains ten names, a number which occurs somewhat frequently in the annals of ministerial mortality. JOHN M'KERSEY, who felt in his last hour "a solid peace and unshaken confidence in God:"—JOHN JENNINGS, a young man, ready for every good work, who only entered the ministry in 1796:—JOHN DUTTON, who laboured a few years in England, and then went to the West Indies, where he lived but a few weeks:—ROBERT GREEN, "a young man whose understanding, study, diligence in the work of the ministry, and close walking with God," promised great usefulness and success; and one of whose last utterances was,—

> "Not a cloud doth arise
> To darken the skies,
> Or hide for a moment my Lord from my eyes:"—

JOHN VIPOND, who had only travelled three years:—FRANCIS JEUNE, a native of Jersey, a young man of promise, cut off by fever in Grenada:—DAVID GORDON, who had travelled about fourteen years in Ireland:—ARCHIBALD MONTGOMERY, whose ministry was also of short duration:—ROBERT ROBERTS, "a faithful minister of Christ above forty years:"—and JOHN FURZ, "a native of Wilton, near Sarum," who ran a long and useful ministerial course:—all died in peace.

This comparatively large number of deaths, chiefly those of hopeful young men, and the fact that only thirteen candidates, among whom is the name of Joshua Marsden, were admitted on trial, evidently impressed the Conference deeply. At the close of the obituaries is the following affecting paragraph: "While every pious reader of these accounts of the deaths of so many ministers of Christ is disposed to give glory to God in the highest, for His love to them, it is hardly possible to be without a degree of fear lest their loss should be severely felt. O that the ever-blessed God may fill their places with burning and shining lights, and enable His servants to be prepared for the solemn hour when they must go into another world!"

"We go on well," says Dr. Clarke, in a letter written in the Conference, "though, I think, slowly. The preachers are in a good spirit; and I trust the pleasure of the Lord prospers in our hands." A painful impression was made on the country in the month of May by the act of a lunatic, James Hadfield, who fired a pistol at the king in Drury Lane Theatre, by which His Majesty's life was placed in great peril. The Conference therefore presented a loyal address to His Majesty deprecating the atrocious deed, and expressing thanks to God for his deliverance, and prayers for his future protection. The number of Circuits at this time in the British Islands was one hundred and sixty-one, being an increase of five.* The number of members in the several Societies in the British Islands was one hundred and nine thousand seven hundred and fifty-one; being an increase on the year of one thousand seven

* Weatherfield, St. Ives, (Hunts.), and Framlingham, ceased to be Circuits; and St. Neot's, Dursley, Jersey, Ludlow, Ruthin, Easingwold, Inverness and Monaghan, were numbered as Circuits.

hundred and eighty-two. In Gibraltar, fifty, the same as last year; and in the British American Societies and those in the West India Islands, thirteen thousand six hundred and sixty-seven; being an increase of eight hundred and eighty-seven. Although but twelve months had elapsed since the commencement of the Irish Missions, the experiment had worked so satisfactorily, that the number of missionaries was doubled in that interesting field of labour. In British America there were eleven missionaries, being an increase of three: but in the West Indies there were twenty, instead of twenty-two.

Important results of the annual review of the work.

We cannot but notice that this annual examination of the whole surface of these islands in reference to the relative progress of religion through the instrumentality of the Methodist ministry, not only involves considerable labour and attentive consideration, but is also productive of very important results. Before the introduction of Methodism there was nothing of this kind in existence. The Parliament or the Government might occasionally have seen reasons for instituting inquiries into the increase or decrease of mineral or metallic productions. The statistics of agriculture and manufactures had occasionally attracted close attention. But who had sought moral statistics, or made inquiry into the progress or decline of real religion? The people had heard of visitations, and of episcopal and archidiaconal charges; but the *religion* of the people,—who had thought of making a close, careful, extensive annual inquiry into this? We do not insinuate, that Methodism contained all the religion of the country. We only mean that this inquiry extended so far as Methodist teaching and influence prevailed. And even thus far, it was productive of most essential benefit. It brought under review every part of the country into which Methodism had been

introduced, and the action and effect of all the means and appliances which the Connexion employed for the purpose of spreading experimental and practical godliness throughout the land. The direct examination of ministerial character would also lead to great searchings of hearts among the preachers, while a careful review of the results of their labours, presenting, as it did, the rapid progress of religion in one Circuit, and its stationary or retrograde condition in another, would strongly tend to stir up their energies and stimulate their exertions for the furtherance of their great object.

Transactions of Conference.

"Sundry Miscellaneous Regulations" found in the Minutes of this Conference fully confirm our views as to the religious benefit resulting from the investigation made at this annual assembly. In the two or three previous years, many extensive and blessed revivals had been productive of great good in the conversion of hundreds from the error of their ways. But with these "times of refreshing," there had been occasional extravagances which justified the apprehension, that excitement and emotion had been sometimes mistaken for the work of the Spirit. The Conference thought it right to exercise a godly jealousy, and in the following Minute to raise the note of caution against anything likely to mar the work of God. "*Q.* Do we sufficiently explain and enforce practical religion, and attend to the preservation of order and regularity in our meetings for prayer, and other acts of Divine worship? *A.* Perhaps not. We fear there has been irregularity in some of the meetings, and we think that some of our hearers are in danger of mistaking emotions of the affections for experimental and practical godliness. To remedy or prevent, as far as possible, these errors, let Mr. Wesley's extract of Mr. Edwards's pamphlet on 'Religious

Affections' be printed without delay, and circulated among our people." *

In those earlier times also, as in some cases in the present day, there was a strong disposition to celebrate the anniversaries of certain religious institutions with a grand musical display. The grave and simple choral service was suspended by "sackbut, harp, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music." Professional singers from the theatres and elsewhere were engaged; and in some instances scenes occurred not altogether in accordance with the sacredness of the Sabbath, or in harmony with the religiousness of the occasion. The Conference, convinced that this disreputable practice must be checked, passed the following wholesome resolution:—

Q. "Can anything be done to prevent what appears to us a great evil, namely, bands of music and theatrical singers being brought into our chapels when charity sermons are to be preached? *A.* Let none in our Connexion preach charity sermons, where such persons and such music are introduced. And let the stewards, trustees, and leaders be informed that such a practice is offensive to the Conference, who believe it has been hurtful to the minds of many pious people."

Improved arrangements for the Missions.

The foreign Missions, in reference to which the Connexion had proceeded in its usual course of following the openings of Providence, and making rules for the proper conduct of the work, as occasion for them arose, were brought fully under consideration, and a general collection ordered to be made in the course of the year for their support. This arrangement necessitated the appointment of certain persons to take charge of the local and general contributions. It was accordingly ordered, that "the

* Minutes, vol. ii., p. 57.

superintendents shall keep exact accounts of all moneys received by them on account of the Missions, and of all disbursements of that money, and transmit those accounts annually to Dr. Coke, or, in his absence, to the London superintendent, to be laid before the Conference." Further important regulations were made as to the terms on which married and single men should be received as missionaries, and for insuring the adoption of Methodist discipline, and the introduction of uniformity in the mode of conducting public and social worship. Every Mission station was thus constituted a Circuit, over which the superintendent exercised the same oversight as in England.

Embarrassed state of the connexional funds. Its cause.

The great subject, however, which pressed itself on the attention of this Conference, was the embarrassed state of the connexional funds. The rapid and steady increase of the work at home was the cause of much financial difficulty. Had the preachers devoted their sole or principal attention to the improvement of existing Societies, and the training of members in piety and the observance of discipline, no doubt ample funds would have been forthcoming for the respectable support of the ministry. Instead of this, the grand apostolic principle of Wesley, not merely to go to those who wanted the Gospel, but to those who wanted it most, was acted on by his successors. While doing their utmost to nurture those who were gathered out of the world, they penetrated the still benighted localities of the country, and extended the saving influence of the Gospel to people who knew not its value, and were not prepared to support its ministers. The extent to which this was done must be taken into account, in order to perceive its necessary demand on the connexional funds. At the death of Wesley the number of

Circuits in the British Islands was one hundred and eight, and of the preachers two hundred and ninety-four. At the Conference of 1800, ten years afterward, the Circuits were one hundred and sixty-one, and the preachers four hundred and seventeen, an increase of fifty-three Circuits and one hundred and twenty-three preachers. These figures show rather more than a yearly average of five new Circuits, and of twelve preachers to be supported, and provided with houses, horses, and every other necessary. Had all this been accomplished on the most moderate and economical scale, the increase of cost must have been very considerable. Instead, therefore, of being surprised that the Conference was embarrassed by the pressure of increasing demands, it would have been a wonderful thing if such difficulties had not arisen. The mode of publishing the state of the several funds in detail, which a few years before was pressed on the Conference in no very kindly spirit, was the only thing which enabled it to procure the necessary amount of support. In the absence of such published statements, the people never would have been persuaded that the necessities of the Connexion were so great, and the claims for increased contributions so extensive.

The concluding article in the Minutes for the year is, therefore, very appropriately "An Address to the Members of the Methodist Societies in England, Scotland, and Ireland, respecting the present State of their Finances." The urgency of the case is stated by showing that the Book-room has made the largest possible advances; so much so, that it had left unpaid a debt of one thousand pounds to the paper merchant. The means of relief suggested was an average subscription of one shilling from every member in Society. This would just meet the case; and, considering that the gifts of the opulent ought fully

to compensate the deficiencies of the needy, was shown to be only a reasonable requirement.

The Friendly Union.

In the year 1772, an association, composed of members of the Methodist Societies, was formed in London; and called "the workhouse preachers." Similar communities were afterwards organized in other large towns under different names. In Bristol they were called "village preachers," in Leeds "prayer-leaders," in Dublin "poor-house preachers," and in London, at this time, "the FRIENDLY UNION." The design of this body was the employment of pious and zealous members of the Methodist Society, who had some abilities for making known the truths of the Gospel to the poorer classes. They preached in workhouses, dwelling-houses, or other suitable places. Those who had not ability for preaching, visited the poor and sick in their dwellings, and held prayer-meetings, labouring to instruct and improve those whom other evangelical agencies did not reach. In the year 1800, an improved organization was prepared for this body in London, under the sanction of Joseph Benson and James Wood. It comprised rules for the examination and admission of members, directions for their weekly and other meetings, arrangements for the appointment of officers, with the duty of each; in short, a complete code of regulations for all the objects of their union and course of duty. These rules, after a short period, were generally adopted by the similar institutions in other places, and contributed to increase their usefulness.

Richard Watson, his great talents.

Richard Watson was received into full Connexion at the Conference of 1800, and appointed to the Hinckley Circuit, with George Sargent as his superintendent. At this period, his biographer observes, "his past success, his present prospects, and the examples of ministerial zeal and

ability with which he was surrounded, all conspired to operate upon his ardent and ingenuous mind, and to stimulate him to renewed diligence both in his ministry and studies." A striking instance of his aptitude in acquiring knowledge may be here mentioned. While at Hinckley, Mr. Watson renewed his intercourse with his friend, Mr. Edmondson, then in the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Circuit. In one of their interviews Mr. Edmondson persuaded him to begin the study of Hebrew; and on that day month, Mr. Edmondson says, "meeting me again at the same place, he read the first Psalm, accounting grammatically for every word; and a beautiful paraphrase on the whole Psalm, which he had drawn up from the fine ideas expressed in the original." * He had sometime previously begun to read the Greek Testament, and the vast stores of Holy Scripture, in all their primitive grandeur and fulness, were opening to his investigation. But an event soon occurred which blasted this fair prospect, and greatly interfered with his usefulness as a minister, and his happiness as a man.

His reading was limited only by the extent of his time, and means of procuring books. Judicious selection of theological works was perhaps not thought of,—certainly not practised. Among other great subjects which came under his notice, was that of the Trinity. He read all the books bearing on this doctrine within his reach; and as some of them did not pay that deference to the Scriptures so requisite in all questions of this nature, but mixed up the authoritative declarations of holy writ with the speculations of a vain philosophy, Watson was sometimes led into doubt and uncertainty, although he never denied the sound and orthodox views of Divine truth in which he had been

* Rev. Thomas Jackson's "Life of Richard Watson," p. 46.

trained. His case was similar to that of Joseph Benson, noticed in the preceding volume. Happily for him, he had a wise and able adviser in Wesley, who wrote him :—"I believe just what is revealed, and no more; but I do not pretend to account for it, or to solve the difficulties that may attend it. Let angels do this if they can; but I think they cannot. I think even these

'Would find no end, in wandering mazes lost.'

Some years since, I read about fifty pages of Dr. Watts's ingenious treatise upon the glorified humanity of Christ; but it so confounded my intellects, and plunged me into such unprofitable reasonings, yea, dangerous ones, that I would not have read it through for five hundred pounds. It led him into Arianism. Take care that similar tracts (all of which I abhor) have not the same effect upon you." If this book was calculated to produce such an effect on the logical and practised mind of Wesley late in life, its influence upon an ardent young minister of twenty-one could not have been salutary, especially as he had not then learned to discriminate accurately between the distinct provinces of reason and revelation.

Watson had acquainted himself with the different forms which various errors had assumed, and their influence on the church in different ages. Possessed of considerable readiness in argument, he frequently discussed these subjects in the social circle. He occasionally took a position contrary to the sound and orthodox doctrine, in order to draw out the strength of his friends in support of the truth. Such a practice may succeed in the schools, but should never be employed in promiscuous company, especially before weak brethren. Watson fell under the suspicion of heresy. It was affirmed that he was an Arian, and denied original sin, and the proper Godhead and atonement of Christ.

Instead of ascertaining the extent of his erroneous opinions, and endeavouring to aid him in threading his way through the labyrinth, reports of his defection from the truth were circulated among the people, until at length, when he went to preach in one of the villages, the pulpit was shut against him, and even a night's lodging refused, where he had been received "as an angel of God." The effect of this glaringly improper conduct upon a generous and highly sensitive mind like Watson's was decisive; he immediately withdrew from the ministry. A few weeks afterward he declared, "I am not an Arian, nor ever professed myself to be one." He left hastily, perhaps rashly, having been the subject of discourteous and unreasonable treatment. Mr. Burdsall, who was Watson's first superintendent, and who knew him intimately, says, "Never would he have left our Connexion, but for the usage of two or three of his brethren, who had neither the mind nor the generosity that were requisite to the right treatment of this active and inquiring young man."* There can be no doubt that in this instance Watson was disobedient to that divine call by which he was led into the sacred office of the ministry. He was often heard to say, "I only regret that I did not lay my case before my brethren, and leave myself in their hands."

He leaves the Connexion.

One thing is particularly observable. Harshly and unjustly as he had been treated, and keenly as he felt it, he made no attempt at retaliation; he formed no party, as he certainly might have done. He retired in peace, and went into business. His wife's father was a zealous local preacher in the New Connexion, and Mr. Watson united himself to that Christian body. He met in a Class led by a farmer's labourer, in a village chapel. His

* See this case at length in JACKSON's "Life of Watson," p. 51.

mind soon regained its wonted tone, and he was requested to act as a local preacher. It was subsequently proposed that he should enter the ministry; and, in about two years and a half after he had retired from the Hinckley Circuit, he went, as a New Connexion minister, to supply a vacancy at Manchester. As Mr. Watson was not influenced by any objection to Wesleyan discipline in leaving his old friends, so it was from no partiality to its discipline that he joined the New Connexion. He felt that he was called of God to preach the Gospel, and here an opening was set before him. The theological opinions of the two bodies were identical, and he then saw nothing in the discipline of the New Connexion to prevent him from conscientiously administering it. "It is a high and permanent honour to the Methodist New Connexion to have been the means of rescuing from obscurity and sorrow this great and excellent man; and that it afforded an opportunity of cultivating those talents by which multitudes of mankind have been so greatly instructed and edified, and which are likely to promote the interests of generations yet unborn. Had it not been for that Connexion, according to all human probability, he must have sunk under an overwhelming load of distress and unmerited obloquy."*

Becomes a minister in the New Connexion.

Although his name does not appear in the list of the young men admitted on trial this year, Daniel Isaac, who had been supplying a vacancy, was regularly appointed to the Louth Circuit. Great were the searchings of heart which this man of God experienced as to his call to the ministry. Many sleepless nights did he spend in earnest prayer for a fuller revelation of God's will on this vital question. The Lord answered and encouraged him by making the first sermon in his new Circuit the means of converting at least one person.

Daniel Isaac.

* JACKSON'S "Life of Watson," p. 57

West Indies.

Our last reference to the work of God among the Negroes in the West Indies presented a cheering aspect. The beneficial effect of missionary labour upon the Negro slaves had been acknowledged by the local government; and the supreme power at home had allowed two Missionaries to sail in a post-office packet, without payment of the usual king's head-money. Yet these favourable circumstances soon changed. Mr. Stephenson, one of the missionaries so favoured, reached his destination in safety, and entered upon his work. There was then no law to prevent his preaching to the slaves, as well as to other inhabitants of the island. His labours were crowned with success; many were awakened and brought to God, and perfect tranquillity prevailed.

Persecuting law in Jamaica.

No sooner, however, had Mr. Stephenson made an impression on the Negro mind, than a spirit of opposition and persecution was excited, which strengthened as his success increased. In May, 1800, the colonial legislature enacted a law prohibiting every one from preaching on the islands, unless duly qualified according to the rites of the Church of England or Scotland. The penalties attached to a violation of this law were a fine of fifty pounds, and imprisonment at the discretion of the magistracy.

The law was evidently made to silence Mr. Stephenson, by specifying qualifications which it was well known he did not possess. As it could not be permanent, until confirmed by the home government, he held it to be, as it unquestionably was, a persecuting measure, and resolved to disobey it. He was soon taken into custody, and committed to jail. Finding provisions and every other necessary enormously expensive in the prison, he procured bail. The trial came, and the result was what might have been expected; Mr. Stephenson was found guilty, with the

Imprisonment of the missionary.

"aggravating circumstance of having shaken hands with some of the black people." He was condemned to pay a fine of fifty pounds, and the fees of court, and to be imprisoned six months. He was again consigned to jail.

When these facts came to the ears of Dr. Coke, he memorialized the government, and was indefatigable in procuring the aid of noblemen and gentlemen of influence, for the abolition of this persecuting law. It was disallowed by his Majesty in Council, and information of the fact was transmitted to Bermuda. Before it reached that island, however, Mr. Stephenson had endured the full measure of punishment assigned him, and was released from prison, so emaciated by his long confinement in that sultry climate, that he never fully recovered from the injuries he had sustained.

The law disallowed by government.

Little has been said in this History of the many publications with which the character of Wesley was assailed during his life, and by which the work he had founded was opposed after his death. A moderate selection from the mass of libel, slander, and invective, would have materially increased the size of these volumes, and it has therefore been scarcely noticed. The following case, however, in which the slanderer was brought to a sense of his wickedness, and made all the reparation in his power, by a full and candid acknowledgment of his fault, although too late to repair the injury, is too remarkable to be omitted. It will be best related by transcribing the letter, which, with the writer's consent, was published by Dr. Coke.*

One who had slandered Wesley confesses his sin.

* "To the Rev. Dr. Coke, New Chapel, City Road, London.

"*Saturday Morning, January 24th*, 1801.

"Rev. Sir,

"As the author of a silly pamphlet published some years ago, entitled 'An

The Conference of 1801 began at Leeds, July twenty-seventh. John Pawson was elected president the second time,—the first preacher who received this double honour,—and Dr. Coke secretary. The Circuits had increased in number to one hundred and sixty-seven, being six more than in the preceding year.* The Conference of 1801.

The want of labourers must have been severely felt, as only nineteen young men were accepted, and the list of deaths and defections amounted to seventeen. The obituary notices are the most numerous hitherto known. They comprise the following honoured names:—JOHN MOON, brought to God when only fourteen, and who served twenty-seven years in the ministry;—ROBERT SMITH,

impartial Review of the Life and Writings of the Rev. J. Wesley,' I have taken the liberty of addressing you on that subject, for the purpose of disburthening my mind, in some degree, of that intolerable weight with which it has been oppressed, in consequence of the folly and wicked tendency of that publication; and I now candidly declare to you and to the world, that most of the pretended facts therein mentioned are groundless, the charges sometimes false, and the characters, as delineated therein, both of the Rev. Mr. Wesley and others, are generally unjust, and unsanctioned even by my own opinion. At the same time I flatter myself you will have the candour to believe that my motives in the publication were influenced rather by folly and wantonness than deliberate wickedness; more especially if it be taken into consideration, that at that time I entertained sentiments somewhat different from what I do at present.

"I expect, from your known liberality, that no undue advantage will be taken of the candid declaration now made, (though you are at liberty, if you think proper, to make it public). Wishing you, in the mean while, all imaginable prosperity in the great work in which you are so usefully and zealously engaged, I beg leave to subscribe myself, Rev. Sir,

"Your most obedient humble Servant,

"J. COLLET."

* Ludlow, Berwick, Miltown, and Athlone ceased to be numbered as Circuits; while Wednesbury, Wigan, Barnsley, Mallow, Roscrea, Tuliamore, Rathmelton, Skipton, Lincoln, and Carlisle became Circuits.

"a man of deep piety and genuine simplicity," whose last words were, "Bless God for a present salvation!"—THOMAS SHAW, a native of Barnard Castle, whose useful course was soon ended;—JOHN MOSES, who entered the ministry "while yet young," and fell an early victim to his ardent zeal;—GEORGE WHITE, another young man, in whom the church lost a faithful labourer;—JOSEPH SHAKESPEARE, who only travelled a few weeks;—THOMAS HEWETT, "a faithful friend of our doctrines and discipline;"—JOHN HURLEY, who "fell a martyr to his great exertions in our present revival" in Ireland;—WILLIAM AP RICHARD, who "possessed the happy art of communicating religious instruction in few and plain words," but "the opening flower was soon cut down;"—THOMAS KEYS, who "travelled two years with good success;"—WILLIAM GAMBLE, whose few months' toil were ended by fever;—JOHN FURNACE, a native of Birstal recommended for the ministry by Bramwell, in 1794, and who finished his work exclaiming, "O, the pain, the bliss of dying! What a blessing it is to be ready!"—JOHN POOLE, who "entered on the Itinerant Plan in the year 1759, and travelled thirty years with an unblemished character;"—and ALEXANDER MATHER, one of the fathers of the Connexion, concerning whom something more must be said.

Born at Brechin in 1733, and the son of parents reputable and somewhat serious, his morals were so carefully guarded, that he grew up "an utter stranger to the vices common among men." The Catechisms were committed to memory; and "while at the Latin School," under one of the master's prayers, he was "struck with convictions," which produced an undying "desire to be a Christian." At thirteen, he joined the rebels, and fought at Culloden, "where many mighty ones fell on the heath." After the disastrous flight, Alexander returned home. His father

refusing to admit him into the house, his mother tried to hide him among her relations, "until the indignation was overpast;" but they shrank from the danger of harbouring a rebel. After he had been taken to the commanding officer, who asked him many questions, and told him to "go home," his father relented. In his nineteenth year, "being well acquainted with his business," he "determined to go abroad." At Perth, a young woman invited him to the Episcopal meeting: "it affected him much, and he attended it often." The next year he went to London, and was employed by his uncle; but being "a foreigner," his master was obliged to dismiss him. After his marriage, he was "in good earnest for salvation;" "bought up all opportunities for prayer;" and "resolved to serve God with all his heart."

Employed in a godly family, his religious desires were quickened. "He sometimes went to his knees at bed time, and continued till two o'clock, when he renewed his work." "Baking pans on Sundays," however, troubled his conscience, and "he had no rest day nor night." He found some comfort in the "holy communion; but the sense of profaning the Sabbath soon took it away." He gave his master "warning," an act which led to the abatement of this form of Sabbath profanation in the entire neighbourhood, and its complete abandonment by his employer. He attended preaching at the Foundery; his wife at first strongly objected, but soon accompanied him, and remained at the Class Meeting: *he* was much refreshed, but *she* said, "They had all agreed what to say, in order to catch us." Easter-day, 1754, he heard Wesley, and he writes, "God set my heart at liberty, removing my sins from me, as far as the east is from the west;.....all my sorrow, and fear, and anguish of spirit being changed into a solid peace."

Thoughts of preaching soon entered his mind. "This is a common temptation among young men," said Wesley. "Several have mentioned it to me. But the next thing I hear of them is, that they are married, or upon the point of it." "Sir, I am married already."—"Care not for it; but seek God in fasting and prayer." Still he felt he must preach. "To be a Methodist Preacher is not the way to ease, honour, pleasure, or profit," said Wesley. "It is a life of much labour and reproach. They often fare hard, often are in want. They are liable to be stoned, beaten, and abused in various manners. Consider this, before you engage in so uncomfortable a way of life." He was allowed to make a trial the following day at Snow-fields, again at Wapping a few days afterward, and finally, at ten o'clock at night, he was told to preach in the Foundery at five the next morning. This was the critical trial. While making his dough, he meditated, and prayed for help. His work done, he prayed, and "read the Bible to find a text," until "two in the morning." He then "worked till near four," meditating and praying all the time, but "could not fix on a text." Arrived at the Foundery "in fear and trembling," he "gave out the hymn in a voice so faint, that nobody could hear;" "and being no singer myself," he says, "we were all at a stand." His very joints shook. He prayed, and opened his Bible on, "Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your body and spirit which are His." The trial over, he left himself in Wesley's hands, to be employed or laid aside, as he judged best.

There was evidently a latent preaching power, which time and practice would develope; and Wesley encouraged him to continue. He was soon more employed than his strength would allow. All his preaching-time was redeemed from sleep, and he was in bed only eight hours a week.

Hard labour, constant abstemiousness, and frequent fasting, brought him so low, that he was hardly able to follow his work. "After hastening to finish my business abroad," he writes, "I have come home all on a sweat in the evening, changed my clothes, and run to preach; then walked or run back, changed my clothes, and gone to work at ten, wrought hard all night, and preached at five the next morning. I ran back to draw the bread at a quarter or half-past six; wrought hard in the bake-house till eight; then hurried about with the bread till the afternoon, and perhaps at night set off again."

In 1757, he went to the Epworth Circuit, including Lincoln, Boston, Nottingham, Gainsborough, Grimsby, and Sheffield. He walked all the way from London, leaving his wife to be supported on four shillings a week from the stewards. The severities of persecution soon crossed his path. At Boston, a mob, headed by beat of drum, threw "squibs among the people;" the preacher fled, and the moment he turned his back, "dirt and stones flew like hail on every side." On he went, with the ever-augmenting rabble "at his heels, throwing all that came to hand." Weak, and spent with blows and falls, he knew not what to do. "Ditch him! ditch him!" was the united yell. A ruffian tried to "drag him to the horse-pond;" and others "plastered him over again with dirt." A gentleman rescued him; but as he walked the streets, now and then facing his pursuers to take breath, they "threw dirt out of the kennels in his face," and made the welkin ring with "a general shout for the glorious victory." Faint and breathless, he arrived at the inn, and his first thought was, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!" "I cannot keep you here," said the landlord; "for the mob will pull my house down." "Sir," replied the un-

daunted sufferer, "I am in *your* house; but while I use it as an inn, it is *mine*. Turn me out at your peril. If you fear your house, apply to a magistrate for protection." He "mounted in the yard," and then, "the gates being opened, rode through a shower of stones, and came safe to a friend's house," so bruised that he could hardly stir; it was a full year before he quite recovered.

"This hard beginning made a hero of the cool-headed and strong-hearted Scotchman;" and he was not the man to submit ignominiously to such ruffianism. He knew how to handle unfaithful magistrates as well as unfeeling mobs. The next day he was in court. "You are the aggressors," said the chairman roughly; "and now you have the impudence to come to us, requiring justice against others." "If I have broken any law, inflict the penalty on me. But in the mean time, I require you, in his majesty's name, to do justice upon these rioters," was the calm reply. As the bench could not move him, they arranged for him to call upon one of them privately; when the ringleaders were told, "Either make it up with Mr. Mather, or I will send you to gaol directly." This settled the business. The earlier years of his itinerancy abound with similar instances of brutality on the part of the rabble, and cool heroism on the part of the preacher.

Mather rose to immediate distinction, and for forty-three years was one of the most prominent, laborious, and useful ministers in Methodism. Wesley took him into his confidence, listened to his advice, ordained him with his own hands, and evidently regarded him as a man on whom the future welfare of the Societies must largely depend. According to Pawson, he was known as "Wesley's right-hand man." Wherever he went, large numbers were added to the church; and in several important towns he

witnessed blessed and extensive revivals. Richly endued with the gift of "governments," he took a leading part in the arrangement of our ecclesiastical polity after Wesley's death. Misrepresented and abused by the prominent spirits of the storms which rose and raged with such unholy fury, "his noble soul was elevated above the momentary opinion of a party. He looked only at the interests and glory of the Redeemer's kingdom, and waited for his reward in a better world." He had a strong mind, quick apprehension, fertile genius, and retentive memory. His preaching was plain, pointed, and earnest, highly acceptable and useful in every Circuit. Tender-hearted, disinterested, and charitable, he shepherded the flock with all diligence and good fidelity.

And how did such a man die? Let us hear a few of his last words. "Mine is a hope of more than forty years; it cannot easily be shaken."—"My confidence in Him is as firm as a rock."—"I am happy in Jesus."—"O that exercise of praise and thanksgiving! It has been the delight of my soul, my chief exercise on earth. I have loved Thy word, Thy law, Thy people; and I love them still."—"Jesus answers, 'Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee. Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away!' Jesus has made *me* all fair!"—"The Judge is at the door, and I rejoice that He is!"—"Why did you call me back? I have been in paradise. As surely as I shall go there again, I have been in heaven this morning."—"Why are Thy chariot wheels so long in coming?"—"Tell me, shall I die *this* night?" "Yes, there is no doubt of it," was the reply. "He whom I have served for near fifty years, will not forsake me now.—Glory be to God and the Lamb for ever! Amen. Amen. Amen."—His voice fails; he speaks little that can be heard; his lips move, indicating the uprising of the heart to God, "till,

seeming to fall into a sweet slumber," he silently breathes his soul into the hands of his Redeemer, "about four o'clock in the afternoon" of Friday, the twenty-second of August, 1800.

Labours and successes of the Irish missionaries.

The Irish Mission was still prosecuted with great vigour. The labours of Ouseley and Graham having been most successful the preceding year, the work was now confided to them in conjunction with Lawrence Kane, who was appointed for the south of Ireland. Ouseley and Graham had special charge of the province of Ulster; with liberty to travel through the south and west, as they thought proper. To convey a distinct idea of the labours, oppositions, and successes of these apostolic men, is a difficult task. It can, indeed, be done but in part; and then only by a series of details which appear tedious, but which alone reveal the operations of a great spiritual agency, that enlightened many of the darkest, and saved many of the worst, in that interesting, but, then especially, benighted land.

Just after this Conference, James Rennick, chairman of the Clones District, wrote a letter to Dr. Coke, in which he says, "About the latter end of the month of May, the two Irish missionaries, brothers Graham and Ouseley, met me at Carrigallen, (a fair-town in the county of Leitrim, Connaught,) about the borders of the county, where we had the greatest outpouring of the Spirit. Other parts of the Circuit they had been in, but they had not been here before. Brother Ouseley preached, and towards the conclusion a girl was converted. Next day, they came to Armagh, and brother Ouseley preached in the market, (both the missionaries sitting on horseback, which is the usual way,) to a great crowd of people, notwithstanding it rained heavily all the time. In the evening brother Graham preached in a

field about a mile from this, and good was done. Next day, about two miles off, we were driven into the fields again. Here brother Ouseley preached. Towards the conclusion, the cry of mourners broke out, and continued until the clouds of the night drove us into a large barn, where we remained a long time. Many, I think, were converted. But next day surpassed all. Being the Sabbath, brother Graham preached again, on a hill, to many hundreds, when the cry of mourners broke out again. Brother Ouseley preached in the evening to a large congregation. O, dear Sir, how awful to hear persons crying aloud for mercy in the open air, and many finding the pearl of great price! I am afraid, Sir, the Irish missionaries have ruined their constitutions." The late Thomas Davis, writing also to Dr. Coke, gives the following account: "Permit me, my dear Sir, to say something of the Irish missionaries, Messrs. Graham and Ouseley. The mighty power of God accompanied their word with such demonstrative evidence as I have never known, or, indeed, rarely heard of. I have been present in fairs and markets, while these two blessed men of God, with burning zeal and apostolic ardour, pointed hundreds and thousands to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And I have seen the immediate fruit of their labour,—the aged and the young falling prostrate in the most public places of concourse, cut to the heart, and refusing to be comforted, until they knew Jesus and the power of His resurrection. I have known scores of these poor penitents to stand up and witness a good confession; and, blessed be God, hundreds of them now adorn the Gospel of Christ Jesus. These two men have been the most indefatigable in their labours of love to perishing sinners, of any that I have yet known. From four to six hours they would preach, exhort,

and pray; and next day, perhaps, ride a journey, and encounter the same difficulties. Thus,—

'They scorn their feeble flesh to spare,
Regardless of their swift decline.'

"My dear Sir, I am wanting both in memory and language to set forth the wonders I have seen wrought by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit. When I look at the usefulness of these two dear men, I am humbled to the dust; and, again, when I view them with shattered frames and wrecked constitutions, stepping into the grave, I am truly affected." * The severity of their labours and exposure had a serious effect upon their health for some time, and produced the dangerous appearances referred to above; happily the anticipations of an early decease were unfounded. Both these zealous men were spared to render to the church a lengthened period of service.

Spiritual prosperity in Coleraine.

Nor was the progress of the good work in Ireland confined to the labours of the missionaries. The papers of the late venerable William Fergusson, who laboured from the Conference of 1800 to that of 1802 in the Coleraine Circuit, supply the following information. Among several persons brought to God in that locality was John M'Kenny. In early youth being restrained from evil by pious parents, he was converted to the Lord when about twelve years of age; and continued to walk steadily and uniformly in the ways of holiness. Called into the work of the ministry, he laboured for many years in the island of Ceylon; and, after a short visit to his native country, was appointed to Sydney, New South Wales, where he finished his earthly course, happy in God, in 1847. Thomas Waugh was also converted about the same time, and from the period of his union with the Society has been distinguished by

Thomas Waugh.

* W. Reilly's "Memoir of Gideon Ouseley," p. 106.

steady attachment to Methodism and all its interests. Commencing his itinerancy in the year 1808, he has occupied the most important stations in the Irish Connexion, has devoted all the powers of his energetic mind to promote the interests of the church of God, and still continues to exercise a most important and beneficial influence among the members of Irish Methodism.

There was also a gracious work of God amongst the military then stationed in Coleraine, which is worthy of notice. Isaac Phenix, one of those who were then brought to a saving knowledge of the truth, was called into the work of the ministry in England, where he travelled for many years, well known and highly esteemed. Sergeant Ross West, of the 23rd Dragoons, and his wife, became members of the Society, and continued to adorn their Christian profession. They subsequently settled in Glasgow, where they were steady and useful class-leaders in that city. The gracious work extended from Coleraine to the neighbourhood, especially to Billy, where a Society had existed for several years. Two pious and zealous leaders, David M'Curdy and Neal Horan, and their wives, exerted a very powerful moral influence on the neighbourhood. Amongst the new converts, was Matthew M'Ilroy. His enmity against Methodism had been so great, that in the famine of 1800, when it was extremely difficult, even for those who had money, to procure food, he compelled his wife to return some oatmeal which she had got from Mr. M'Curdy, as he would not eat any Methodist bread. But in the following winter he was induced to attend the ministry of the Methodists; and being deeply awakened at a prayer-meeting, when he could no longer conceal the anguish of his soul, he retired from the house to a meadow, where he wrestled with God, till He spoke peace to his soul. He then united himself with

the people whom he had so much despised. After some time he was appointed leader of a Class, and maintained a character of uniform uprightness and integrity to the close of life. The temporal privations which the people generally were called to endure, were very great, occasioned not so much by scarcity of money, as scarcity of food. A pious young man was known to have travelled a whole summer-day with a guinea in his pocket, and to have been unable in the whole of the time to procure a pound of food. But these calamities were sanctified in a very special manner. There was a great deepening of the work of grace, and a very extensive awakening and ingathering of souls into the church of God.

Awful scarcity of food, accompanied by spiritual blessing.

There are few men besides Dr. Coke, who—with all the financial cares and ministerial responsibilities arising out of the oversight of the Societies in Nova Scotia, the rearing up of extensive missions in the West Indies, and the provision of a preached Gospel in their own language for the wild inhabitants of the west and south of Ireland, would not have thought they had sufficiently large and onerous work on their hands. But such was his burning ardour, such his zeal to carry the Gospel where it was most wanted, that he was limited in his aspirations and efforts only by the range of possibility. At the Conference of 1800 he projected a plan for preaching in the Welsh language to the inhabitants of the principality. Himself a native of Wales, he had long felt for the moral degradation of his countrymen, and pathetically called the attention of the Conference to their spiritual destitution. The appeal was favourably received; and John Hughes, who had recently entered the ministry in England, was willing to go as a missionary to his country-

Dr. Coke initiates the Welsh Mission.

men, if another could be found to go with him. Owen Davies, a minister of eleven years' standing, a native of North Wales, having some knowledge of the language, readily consented to accompany Mr. Hughes. They were immediately appointed to this sphere of labour, Ruthin being named as their head quarters. These men were every way qualified for the important work to which they were called. Educated for the Established Church, Mr. Hughes was not only a good scholar, but a man of clear understanding and sound judgment. Mr. Davies was intelligent, generous, and warm-hearted, an able preacher, well acquainted with the laws and usages of Methodism. These were the men whom Providence prepared and sent to preach among the natives of ancient but long-neglected Cambria.

Mr. Edward Jones, his labours and success.

To some extent, indeed, the work was already begun. Edward Jones, of Bathavarn, in the vale of Clwyd, had been converted in Manchester, and joined the Society; but ill health compelled him to return to his native place. In the prospect of this change, he felt it a sore trial to leave a town abounding with religious privileges, and go where, as far as he knew, there was "no one like-minded" with himself in respect of religion. Before leaving Manchester, he called on Mr. Bradburn, to ask his advice. He was received with much kindness, and advised to call on Mr. Hutton, the preacher at Chester, and request him to go over to Ruthin occasionally to preach. Mr. Hutton no sooner heard the request than he said, "I shall be glad to come, if you can get me an open door." Rejoicing in the prospect of having the Methodist preacher in his native place, declaring to his neighbours the truths which had been the means of his own salvation, Mr. Jones hastened to Ruthin, and

hired a room. Shortly afterward Mr. Ridal, one of the preachers from Chester, preached to an attentive congregation. The place was regularly supplied once a fortnight by one of the ministers from Chester. But this was a scant provision for a people hungering for the Gospel, and in the absence of a preacher Mr. Jones held prayer-meetings, and began to give a word of exhortation. When he had done so in the English language for a few times, there was a general desire that he would speak to the people in their own tongue. Yielding to their request, he made a trial, and succeeded much better than he anticipated. The Lord owned his labours in the conversion of many souls: a Society was formed, and the great Head of the Church vouchsafed His continued presence and blessing.

Great, however, were the questionings and curiosity as to this "new religion," which the son of Bathavarn had brought to the place. Some said it was a bad and dangerous doctrine; others, not quite so dissatisfied, stayed to ask what were its errors. The answer was, that it taught that "Christ died for all," and that "every man may be saved." This caused many to read their Bibles with more care, to see "whether these things were so." The same motive led many to hear the preachers, that they might judge for themselves.

Davies and Hughes enter upon their work.

The way had thus been prepared for the appointed missionaries; and when Davies and Hughes arrived, they were received with great joy. They opened their commission without delay, and went through the length and breadth of the land, proclaiming salvation to all through faith in Jesus Christ. The hearts of many were made glad; for the Gospel came "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." At the Conference of 1801, John Bryan and Edward Jones were

also appointed as Welsh missionaries, and their labours too were eminently successful. At the close of 1801, the first Welsh Wesleyan chapel was built in Denbigh. It was opened on the first day of 1802 by Davies and Hughes. At a lovefeast, after evening preaching, three hundred new converts, drawn together from different places, were present; eighty of whom testified what God had done for their souls. These times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord were long and gratefully remembered. The good work rapidly progressed. Thousands flocked to hear the word; and, notwithstanding opposition and persecution, the hand of the Lord was with them, and mighty works were wrought by their humble instrumentality.*

It is crowned with success.

Who can peruse the narrative of such evangelical operations among the ignorant peasantry of Ireland, and the neglected inhabitants of Wales, and see the abundant success with which it pleased God to crown them, without acknowledging that our country had not outgrown its need of Methodism, and that Methodism had not lost its true character, as a messenger of mercy, carrying the Gospel with saving efficacy to those who needed it most? Poor as were all the connexional funds, cramped in their exertions by pecuniary and other difficulties as were the preachers, the work maintained its onward course, and extended the salvation of the Gospel to districts and people covered with thick darkness. And the manner in which these operations were carried on is as remarkable as the success which attended them. Without pomp of power, or glare of intellect, we see plain, simple-minded men, having obtained salvation themselves, made instrumental in leading others to the experience of the same mercy.

* MS. communication from the Rev. Isaac Jenkins; and letter of Edward Jones in the "Welsh Magazine," 1828, p. 313.

Dr. Coke's Commentary.

In the course of this year, Dr. Coke's Commentary on the Old Testament began to be issued in numbers. This was the first Methodist attempt in this kind of literature since Wesley's death. We shall elsewhere notice the character of this work, and only refer to it now, as forming an era in the literary history of the Connexion; and to mark the extraordinary fact, that a man so fully engaged in multifarious and anxious duties, should have been able to secure time for the compilation of a Commentary on the Scriptures.

Religious prosperity at Nottingham.

The work now prospered at Nottingham. Mr. William Edward Miller's ministry was particularly owned of God. His first Sabbath's services resulted in the conversion of many. "In every meeting, conviction seized men and women of all ranks and descriptions; and many cried aloud for mercy, and found peace through a crucified Saviour." His attractive preaching induced several respectable families to attend the chapel; and other circumstances, which are matters for grief rather than rejoicing, tended to increase the congregation and the Society. One Easter Sunday morning, the curate drove fifty Methodists away from the communion table, and declared he would not administer the sacrament to Dissenters. This act, in conjunction with the character of the curate's preaching, led many to forsake the church for the chapel. In the course of this year three hundred members were added to the Society.

Revival in Leeds.

Leeds was very graciously visited, and the labours of John Barber, William Bramwell, and Richard Reece, were crowned with great success. Mr. James Blackett observes: "At that time five classes met in High Street, St. Peter's, and the number of members added to them was very great. It appeared as though all the inhabitants of the place would soon be converted to God. Their minds were so much

affected, that those who had been the most profligate ceased to persecute, and many of them began to pray. Being the leader of two Classes, I visited every house on both sides of the street, and spoke faithfully to each family respecting the salvation of their souls. Many whom I little expected I found awakened to a sense of their danger, and engaged in seeking the Lord in secret. Several of these were desirous of meeting in class, but had not been previously invited. Joy glistened in their eyes, when informed that I was come to seek the wandering sheep, and give them opportunity of receiving religious instruction among the people of God." In the course of the year, the number of members increased about three hundred and seventy.

Isaac's work on "Universal Restoration."

Whilst labouring in the Lynn Circuit, Daniel Isaac was informed that Mr. Vidler, in advocating the doctrine of universal restoration, frequently lavished his vituperations on the Methodists, and challenged all the preachers to refute his statements. Mr. Isaac went to hear him, took notes of his discourse, called on him the next morning, and asked him to say, whether what he had written conveyed a correct view of his arguments and objections. Mr. Vidler admitted that it did. Mr. Isaac then told him, that he felt it his duty to oppose such dangerous doctrine, and to protect those who might sit under his ministry against it; adding, that he proposed to refute it next Lord's day, and he had waited on Mr. Vidler, for any correction he might offer, as he wished to do him perfect justice in stating his arguments. This course led to the preparation of Isaac's piece on "Universal Restoration." But this was not given to the world until some time afterward. "I hesitated for a long time," he says, "about engaging in the controversy, in the hope that some preacher

more competent to the task would have taken it up." *

Adam Clarke at Liverpool.

Adam Clarke was appointed by the Conference of 1801 to Liverpool. He entered upon a zealous discharge of his duties, and prosecuted as diligently as usual his literary and scientific studies. He also displayed an ardent desire for the intellectual improvement of the inhabitants of that large and important town. Soon after his arrival, he organized a society, under the title of the "Philological Society." The rules, questions, and introductory address delivered at its formation, were drawn up by Mr. Clarke, who was its first president.

His health fails.

These labours and studies were too much even for Mr. Clarke's robust constitution. He became alarmingly ill, and lost all sensation. His family and friends apprehended the most distressing results; but he rallied, and persisted in discharging the full meed of his duties. In the ensuing April, however, he became worse, and went to London, in search of the best medical advice. He was told that he must altogether cease from reading, writing, preaching, &c., for at least twelve months, or he would soon be a dead man. He received this opinion with the fortitude of a Christian, and conveyed it to his wife with exquisite tenderness: but the prognostication was at fault; God had other work for him to do, and he was restored.

The Conference of 1802.

The Conference of 1802 was held at Bristol, and began on July twenty-sixth. Joseph Taylor was elected president,†

* "The Polemic Divine," p. 31.

† In a letter to the Rev. James Rogers, Mr. Taylor makes the following pleasant allusion to that minister's kind attention during the Conference: "I take this opportunity to thank you for your kindness showed to me at Bristol. You were all attention to my wants and weakness! You did more to *support the chair* than any man in England! You brought me *wine*

and Dr. Coke secretary. The number of Circuits was now one hundred and seventy-one,—an increase of four.*

Among the thirty-two young men admitted on trial are Samuel Warren and William Naylor; the last of whom still lives and toils in full Circuit work, and is now the father of the Wesleyan ministry. The following six were "taken away from the evil to come:"—JOSEPH BROCK, a young man who preached a few times after his arrival in the West Indies, was carried off by putrid fever, and lamented by all who knew him:—FRANCIS BALLIAU, a native of Jersey, early converted from sin, worldliness, and infidelity; "of cultivated mind," and "an example of the pure and peaceable religion of Jesus Christ;" died triumphantly in his thirtieth year:—THOMAS DUNN, "a steady upright, good man," departed in peace:—THOMAS CARLILL, who, "after labouring much in a local sphere for ten years," entered the ministry in 1762, and faithfully shepherded the flock, until fairly worn out by asthma and old age. "When guarded from exuberant sallies of facetious wit, his discourses were judicious and profitable." Of PEARD DICKENSON we have already given some notice, and need only add, that he maintained to the end a high character as an unaffected, simple-minded Christian, and a faithful and consistent minister. His preaching, never brilliant, greatly improved toward the latter part of his life. His constitution was delicate, and his infirmities many. During the last three years of his life

to cheer my heart; and had I asked, you would have brought me *oil* to make my face to shine.....I pray God to give you plentifully of the new wine of the kingdom, and to anoint you momently with the oil of gladness."—Manuscript letter, February 23rd, 1803.

* Dover and Wigan ceased to be Circuits; Sevenoaks, Higham Ferrers, Ashburton, Retford, Youghal, and Manor Hamilton became Circuits.

his afflictions were great, complicated, and painful; but he bore them all with exemplary patience. A murmuring word was never heard from his lips, nor a discontented look observed in his countenance. Resignation, meekness, long-suffering, and love, were the habitual tempers of his mind, and the rules of his conversation. His discourses with those who visited him, were intelligent and instructive.

His death was remarkably triumphant, and many of his "heavenly breathings" are well worth recording. "I see a great multitude engaged in the worship of God, and I shall be with them."—"I seem all happiness!"—"I have nothing but glory and heaven in my view; my heart is full of God; my cup runneth over!"—"O, happy spirits, I see you, I see you all; and I am coming to you. They are waiting for me, and I must go;" and, clapping his hands, he shouted, "*Victory! Victory!* my Jesus, and my all!"—As the nurse was giving him a little wine, he suddenly pointed upward, and exclaimed, "Hark, do you not hear? They are come for me: I am ready, quite ready."—Shortly after she spoke again, "Stop," said he; "say nothing but glory, glory!"—These were his last words, and, after a painful struggle, he "languished into life."

Christopher Hopper is the last name in this year's register of ministerial mortality. He was born in the parish of Royton, Durham, on Christmas-day, 1722. The youngest of nine children; the son of parents in comfortable circumstances, "of good repute, and much attached to the Church of England;" and intrusted to the care of a pious schoolmaster, who "catechized" him, and "made him attend church every Lord's-day, and all holy-days," he was early the subject of serious impressions. These impressions, however, were neither influential nor per-

manent. Proud and prone to anger, with slight notions of moral evil, he "swore when put out of humour;" "lied when he could gain anything by it;" "pilfered among the children when he could do so with a good grace;" and "took a diabolical pleasure in hanging dogs, worrying cats, killing birds and insects, mangling and cutting them to pieces." Self-willed and headstrong, he "gave himself up to singing, dancing, fishing, fowling, hunting, cock-fighting, card-playing, or whatever the devil brought to town or country." But "the universe appeared as a vault wherein true comfort was entombed; and the sun himself as a lamp to show the horrors of a guilty mind."

Meanwhile, "one Wesley" created a sensation at Newcastle, which spread through the surrounding neighbourhood. "He made a short blaze; soon disappeared; and left us in a great consternation." Christopher heard Charles Wesley; and having made observations which endangered his being called a Methodist, he dismissed "the conversation with a smile, and a piece of drollery." Deepening conviction made him resolve no longer to "be led by the laughing multitude," or "deluded with the noise of vain tongues." The scales fell from his eyes, the "stout heart melted like wax." He "trembled at the word;" and "the pit was open to receive him." Retiring into a little parlour, he sat upon the bed, laid "his guilty head on a pillow," and cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner! Save, Lord, or I perish! Save, or I am lost, for ever lost! My all is guilt, pollution, misery, and helplessness!" A glorious light shone into his heart, and discovered the way of salvation through faith in the atonement; he believed and obtained mercy. "God, Christ, angels, men, heaven, earth, and the whole creation appeared in a new light." "Ah, what think you?" was

now the cry; "Christopher Hopper is converted;" "He hath received the Holy Ghost!" "He is mad; keep far from him, come not near his habitation!" Some pitied him; "but all agreed that he had renounced his baptism, left the Church, and was in a dangerous situation."

Many old companions were awakened; also his "poor old mother," one of his sisters, and a brother, "who had been a champion in the devil's cause." "The fire now kindled, and the flame spread;" invitations poured in from every quarter; and, "or ever he was aware," he found himself an itinerant preacher. Persecuting mobs sought to impress him for the army; but he escaped in marvellous ways, once leaving them "to end the dispute with loud words, hard blows, and bloody faces." His sphere of labour widened, and he renewed his efforts with increased ardour and diligence,—teaching school all day, preaching or meeting a class every night, and holding two, three, or even four services on the Sabbath.

Time and space fail us to story out the labours and travels, the Societies founded, and the mobs encountered, by this noble, apostolic man. All over the north of England, the blast of his trumpet was heard, and the power of his preaching felt. "A little dirt, a few rotten eggs, the sound of a cow's horn, the noise of bells, or a few snow-balls in their season," were mere trifles. But "blows, stones, brickbats, and bludgeons," were "not pleasing to flesh and blood." Sometimes he "lost a little skin, and once a little blood, drawn from his forehead by a sharp stone;" but he was "never more happy in his soul, or more blessed in his labours." The patch on his wounded head was as a badge of honour. Wherever he went, "a glorious work broke out;" the "fire spread from heart to heart;" whole "congregations were melted into tears, and bowed down

before the Lord as the heart of one man." In private houses, barns, ale-houses, and cock-pits; in streets, market-places, and open fields; in peaceful valleys, and on bleak mountain heights, where, on one occasion, congealed "flakes of snow covered him as with a white mantle," his voice was heard calling sinners to repentance.

In 1750, he entered the ministry, and ran an unblemished and prosperous career of forty years, in all the chief parts of England, Ireland, and Scotland. Tall, energetic, and courageous; eloquent, tender, and rousing; a Boanerges to the stout-hearted, and a Barnabas to the sorrowful; possessing a good knowledge of the English tongue, and a creditable acquaintance with the originals of the sacred text, he stood out as a "tall cedar" even among the "goodly forest" of the early Methodist Lebanon. When about sixty-three years old, he retired to Bolton, taking preaching excursions into the surrounding neighbourhood, and winning many souls to Christ. After sixteen years' added toil, he preached his last sermon with "an uncommon degree of energy and power." A week more, and he suddenly dislocates his shoulder, "while cutting a loaf of bread." During three months of painful sufferings, the strong man bows, and exclaims once and again, "Lord Jesus, pity a poor sufferer! But it is all right; it is all right; it will soon be over. His will be done." "I have not the shadow of a doubt; and as for the enemy, I know not what has become of him. I have neither seen nor heard of him for a long time. I think he must have quitted the field." "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." On Friday, March 5th, 1802, he died, "an aged veteran in the armies of Emmanuel," and the oldest of the Methodist preachers in that generation. Right well does he deserve Dr. Clarke's eulogium: "Wesley talks of his preachers;

look at Christopher Hopper! He was, in the strictest sense, a great man; one who, with proper advantages, might have become a first-rate man in any official situation. It is by such men that Methodism will be perpetuated."

The number of missionaries in British America and the West Indies remained without material alteration. The number of members in the British Islands was one hundred and nineteen thousand six hundred and sixty, an increase of five thousand eight hundred and forty-eight; the number of members in Society in British America and the West Indies was fifteen thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine, an increase of two thousand two hundred and seventy-two.

We are very far from desiring to test an important religious question on mere statistical grounds; but the steady and continued increase in the Methodist Societies is a great fact which ought not to escape attention. That this increase should have gone on for forty years in succession, sometimes by hundreds, at others by thousands, is worthy of serious consideration. It must not be forgotten that this was a period the reverse of sweet tranquillity and general national prosperity. Yet in these most unfavourable circumstances, when the foundations of civil society were shaken to their centre by the clamour of faction and the heavings of revolutionary passion; when the truth and profession of Christianity were assailed by all the powers of perverted ingenuity, wit, ridicule, and, above all, by a proud philosophy; when the masses were driven to the verge of desperation by dearth and scarcity of food; and when able and energetic men were labouring to persuade the Methodists that the system was radically corrupt, and the preachers selfish, designing, and tyrannical;—the Methodist Societies continued, without intermission or interruption, to increase in numbers and religious power.

Further and improved regulations were now made respecting the terms on which missionaries were to be received for the West Indies, the time they were expected to remain there, and what was to be done in case of their illness. Superintendents were directed to look out in their respective Circuits, among the travelling and local preachers, for persons suitable and willing to engage in the Mission work. The transactions of Conference.

A general collection was ordered to be made for the West India, Irish, and Welsh Missions; the two latter being formally recognised as parts of the great Mission work. Forty-two Societies applied for, and obtained leave to have the sacraments administered in their chapels,—a proof that the wish to enjoy this Christian privilege was making rapid progress.

Collections were allowed to be made through certain specified parts of the country on behalf of eighteen new chapels. Some of these were probably in the stead of others which had been wrested from their legitimate purpose by seceders; but generally they were demanded by the large addition of members and hearers. The Minutes of this Conference also recognise the existence of certain evils. It is said, "1. Many of the wives of the preachers dress like vain women of the world. 2. Some of the preachers set them the example." Irreverent postures during public worship, and neglect of the house of God, are pointed out, and amended behaviour urged.

The following minute, respecting the examination of candidates for the ministry, was also passed. As the minute specifies both the old mode and the new, it is given entire. "At present the candidate is supposed to have passed the Quarterly Meeting, from which he is recommended to the District Meeting. In addition to this, let

him, if possible, attend the District Meeting, and be examined *before all the brethren present*, respecting his *experience*, his knowledge of divine things, his reading, his views of the doctrines of the Gospel, and his regard for Methodism in general. The preacher who examines him shall be chosen by the ballot of the District Committee. After the examination, the candidate shall withdraw, and the Committee shall deliberate on the propriety or impropriety of his admission on trial, and determine whether he shall be recommended to the ensuing Conference, or not. If it be not convenient for the candidate to attend the District Meeting, three of the Committee shall be chosen by ballot, and appointed to act in this instance for the District."*

The Connexion was indebted to Joseph Entwisle for this very salutary measure. He saw that, as persecution declined, and many of the hardships to which the early preachers had been exposed were being diminished, and tolerable accommodations were generally provided, persons might now desire to enter the Methodist ministry who would not have submitted to its former dangers and privations. This change of circumstances called for increased caution to prevent improper parties being received, and to maintain the purity and efficiency of the Methodist pastorate. After much prayerful consideration, he sketched the above minute, which, with a very slight alteration, was adopted by the Conference.

Prior to the introduction of this rule, the candidate was recommended by the Quarterly Meeting; and unless any objection was made by the District Meeting, he passed on to the Conference. The interposing, therefore, of this District-Meeting examination, where the character, attain-

* Minutes, vol. ii., p. 142.

ments, and qualifications of the candidate could be more deliberately scrutinized than at the Conference, was a most important protective measure.

This leads us to notice a remark frequently made about the origin and adoption of the successive alterations in the polity of Methodism. "This was one of the evils pointed out by Mr. Kilham; but the correction was not then adopted, although it was afterwards introduced," is an observation frequently so put, as to intimate that the Methodist reformer was entitled to all the credit of the alteration; while the leading ministers of the day are supposed to have been guilty of delaying evident improvements from factious or party motives, and afterwards adopting them as their own. This is a violent perversion of the facts. It is true that Kilham complained of the facility with which persons were received as travelling preachers, and suggested that very improper persons might intrude themselves into the ministry. But he did not, like Entwisle, in a Christian temper come forth with wise and well-digested means for removing the evil. The defect was exhibited for the purpose of insinuating intentional dishonesty on the part of superintendents, and suggesting the possibility of their knowingly introducing improper candidates for the fee of a few pounds. Is there any analogy between the conduct of the two parties? Does not one, instead of promoting improvement, interpose a barrier to its progress, while the other really grapples with the defect, and supplies a remedy?

In the autumn of this year, an Essay appeared on the "Immortality and Immateriality of the human Soul." Published by subscription, the first edition was soon sold, and a second favourably received. It was noticed with high commendation in the leading Reviews of the day,

Early life and literary labours of Mr. Samuel Drew.

and regarded as an important contribution in support of the doctrines of Christianity. The work possessed intrinsic merit, and took a respectable position in the literature of the time. Perhaps its celebrity partly arose from the known character and circumstances of its author, Samuel Drew, a shoemaker and Methodist local preacher, of St. Austell.

This highly gifted and excellent man was the son of poor but pious parents, residing near that town. His father was a Methodist leader and local preacher; his mother was also a Methodist, and possessed uncommon energy and zeal. Their circumstances obliged them to employ their children in very early life. At the tender age of eight years Samuel worked at a stamping mill, where tin ores were purified and prepared for the market; and, before he was eleven, was apprenticed to a shoemaker. As he grew up, he displayed a spirit of great daring and energy, which led him into much wickedness, and exposed him to serious danger; but a kind and watchful Providence preserved him. When about twenty, his brother died, and Dr. Adam Clarke, then a young man, stationed in East Cornwall, preached his funeral sermon, standing on the steps which led to Mr. Drew's barn-door. The solemn event had prepared Samuel's mind for serious thought; the word reached his heart; he joined the Methodist Society in June, 1785, and commenced a new course of life.

Although the vigour and energy of a great mind will force its way through almost every conceivable impediment, and grasp the means of usefulness and eminence, it seems very strange that a person circumstanced as Samuel Drew then was should enter upon a course of literary study. A few words will show the circumstances which led to this strange result. As was common in the market towns of Cornwall,

his employer carried on several branches of business. He was a saddler, and did something in the bookbinding line; whilst Samuel had the shoemaking department under his special charge. The shop was visited by a class of people superior to any with whom Drew had hitherto been brought into contact. He heard conversations on the current topics of the day, and not unfrequently discussions on the conflicting doctrines of Calvinism and Arminianism. These awakened his curiosity, and roused his spirit to seek after knowledge. The books brought to the shop for binding provided him means of instruction of which he had no previous conception. Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding" made a deep and powerful impression on his mind. He read to the utmost of his opportunities; searched dictionaries diligently, that he might understand what he read; and, with the most limited means, became a hard student.

About two years after his conversion, with a capital of fourteen shillings, and a loan of five pounds, pressed on his acceptance for the purpose by a religious friend, Mr. Drew went into business on his own account. Difficulty, toil, and privation followed; but these were manfully endured and conquered. A few years sufficed to enable him to carry on his business without embarrassment. He married, became a class-leader and local preacher; bought a few books, and prosecuted his studies with great diligence. When, however, he had disposed of such preliminary inquiries as he thought necessary, he seriously considered the line of study to which he should devote his fragments of time. Astronomy was a favourite subject; but he soon found himself deficient in the necessary mathematical knowledge. History was next thought of; but here the grand objection was the cost of necessary books. Metaphysics

was finally selected, as free from these difficulties; and to this study he devoted all his spare time and energy.

After awhile, a young medical friend, who had been conducted to the very verge of Deism by the continued perusal of infidel writings, particularly Paine's "Age of Reason," put that profane work into Mr. Drew's hands, in hope of converting him to Deism. Drew carefully read the book. The allegations and arguments contained in it led to many conversations between the two friends; and the surgeon, finding Drew's faith in the Bible unshaken, withdrew the book, transferred his doubts from the Bible to the "Age of Reason," and became a believer in divine revelation. The rapid decline and death of this young surgeon soon afterwards, impressed these conversations on Drew's mind with great force. Committing what he could remember of his arguments to paper, he put his notes into the hands of Mr. Truscott and Mr. Treffry, the preachers on the Circuit. They urged him to publish his remarks, as a reply to Paine's mischievous work; and the book appeared in September, 1799, addressed to Thomas Paine himself, who was then alive. The pamphlet attracted great attention. It secured for the author prominent notice in the principal Reviews, and the continued friendship of the Rev. John Whitaker, rector of Ruan Lanyhorne, the accomplished and learned author of the "History of Manchester," and other valuable antiquarian and historical works.

Soon after this publication Mr. Drew printed an elegy of nearly six hundred lines on his young friend; but in this ethereal branch of literature he did not succeed. His pen, however, was not long idle. The Rev. R. Polwhele, vicar of Manaccan, engaged in a controversy with Dr. Hawker, of Plymouth; and although the Doctor had no more to do with Methodism than Polwhele, the latter, acting on

the universal assumption of the day,—that every evangelical minister was to be treated as a Methodist,—introduced into the controversy a scurrilous publication, called "Anecdotes of Methodism." Mr. Drew soon furnished an effective and complete reply. Following the clerical author through every one of his alleged facts, he convicted him of bearing false witness against his neighbours. "I have now gone through the facts themselves," says he, "and have given a specific answer to every anecdote which is worthy of notice. Out of thirty-four anecdotes, eight are false, of six I can get no account, nine are misrepresented, five are related with the omission of many material circumstances, and all the remainder are revised and corrected." * Yet, although this pamphlet was manifestly honest and earnest, and in some places severe, it was evidently so devoid of ill-will and personal feeling, that when soon afterwards Drew published his "Essay on the Soul," Polwhele generously wrote a handsome critique in its favour in the "Anti-Jacobin Review."

Before we leave Mr. Drew for the present, we will transcribe his own account of his early studies. "During my literary pursuits, I regularly and constantly attended on my business, and do not recollect that one customer was disappointed by me through these means. My mode of writing and study may have in them something peculiar. Immersed in the common concerns of life, I endeavour to lift my thoughts to objects more sublime than those with which I am surrounded; and, while attending to my trade, I sometimes catch the fibres of an argument, which I endeavour to note, and keep a pen and ink by me for that purpose. In this state, what I can collect through the day remains on any paper which I have at hand, till the

* "The Life of Samuel Drew. By his Son," p. 130.

business of the day is dispatched, and the shop shut, when, in the midst of my family, I endeavour to analyse in the evening such thoughts as had crossed my mind during the day. I have no study, no retirement; I write amid the cries and cradles of my children; and frequently, when I review what I have written, endeavour to cultivate 'the art to blot.' Such are the methods which I have pursued, and such the disadvantages under which I write." His usual seat, after closing the business of the day, was a low nursing-chair, beside the kitchen fire. Here, with the bellows on his knees for a desk, and the usual culinary and domestic matters in progress around him, his works, prior to 1805, were chiefly written.* In this way, one of the principal literary laymen of Methodism grew up into usefulness and celebrity.

Early in 1803, a gentleman died in London whose history furnishes an example of the extensive sphere of usefulness which Methodism opens up to pious and devoted laymen; and shows the effective influence which they are enabled to exercise in the support of the cause of Christ, and the promotion of His kingdom. Regarding this case as the type of a class, we give the narrative at some length.

The conversion of Mr. John Edwards.

John Edwards, when about sixteen years of age, was taken by his father from Hampshire, on a visit to London. Having to stay over a Sabbath, they attended church, probably without any particular object, and with no reference at all to the minister who officiated. The Rev. Mr. Madan preached; and under the discourse of that celebrated minister young Edwards was convinced of sin, and of his need of a Saviour. On his return home, he obtained that peace which the knowledge of salvation by the remission

* "The Life of Samuel Drew. By his Son," p. 120.

of sins can alone produce, and became a member of the Methodist Society in his native place. He formed an acquaintance with John Mason, subsequently an eminent travelling preacher, and with Peter Price. They took sweet counsel together as to their spiritual progress, while a prayerful reading of Holy Scripture, and hearty devotion to the will of God, made their profiting appear unto all. Attention was soon drawn to Edwards's adaptation for usefulness in the church, and he was urged to give a word of exhortation. His first effort failed to furnish satisfaction to himself, and he desisted for some time. His pious zeal, however, led him again to venture, when he spoke with such freedom, that he frequently exhorted, and was regularly enrolled with the local preachers. Forty years before his death he removed to Lambeth, where he carried on business as an architect. Here he had much edifying intercourse with Wesley and his leading preachers. He set apart a room in his house for the worship of God. As his means increased, his liberality abounded. He converted an adjoining building into a chapel at his own expense, and had the high satisfaction of seeing the conversion of many sinners from the error of their ways.

His piety and usefulness.

His life, however, was not unattended by sorrow. He entered into partnership with another person for the erection of several houses in Marylebone. The project proved unprofitable; the partners called their creditors together, and offered them all the property in satisfaction of their demands. This the creditors accepted, knowing the straightforwardness and honesty of the parties, and gave them a legal discharge from all demands, although the property realized but twelve and sixpence in the pound. Stimulated by this affliction, Edwards devoted himself to his earthly and spiritual interests with renewed zeal.

God prospered his efforts, and after some time he was delighted to pay every one of his former creditors the entire amount from which they had legally discharged him. Although he had many and important temporal affairs on his hands, he ceased not to exercise his spiritual gifts, and to cultivate his mind with great diligence. His preaching was agreeable and effective. And, as his circumstances became more easy, he gladly devoted more time to religious duties, especially preaching. He never obtruded his services, nor interfered with the work of others: his aid was eagerly sought, and cheerfully given. About the year 1800 he was afflicted with a disorder in his eyes, and within twelve months he was attacked with paralysis, from which, however, he rallied, and resumed his preaching. Again he suffered in a similar way, and again he returned to his godly work; until, while at Irchester in Northamptonshire, preparing to go to a neighbouring chapel to preach, he had a third paralytic attack, which removed him to Abraham's bosom. Joseph Benson, who knew him well, closes the account of his life with the following aspiration: "May I follow him as he followed Christ, and, being faithful unto death, receive with him the crown of life in the kingdom of our Father!" *

Progress of the Welsh Mission work.

The Conference of 1802 added two more Welsh preachers to those already employed, namely, John Morris and John Jones. There were therefore six labourers engaged in breaking up the fallow ground, and sowing the good seed of evangelical truth in the wide and barren field before them. Many souls were converted; and in spite of the opposition with which they everywhere had to contend, the Lord daily added to their numbers. Towards the beginning of 1803 they had nearly one thousand members in Society.

* "Methodist Magazine," 1803, p. 296.

The work was spreading, not only in Flintshire and Denbighshire, but also in Carmarthenshire and Anglesea; the congregations were large, and the Divine power attended the word.

The rapid progress and substantial fruits of this work deserve special notice. Owen Davies, in a letter to Dr. Coke, under date of January fourteenth, 1803, says, "The Gospel has reached them, not in word, but in power. Real conversions daily take place among us. Three hundred and fifty have been added this quarter. Our congregations are large, and the Lord gives us favour in the sight of the people. At Abergele we have a hopeful Society, and have purchased ground to build a chapel. At Conway our friends have made an old building into a very good preaching house. At Carnarvon they have converted the playhouse into a chapel. It is far from being an elegant place, but it will contain four or five hundred hearers. In a short time the number of members had increased from forty-five to nine hundred and ninety. At Aberfraw in Anglesea we have about fourscore members." The congregations continued so large, "that we have been obliged to preach out of doors till the present time, and probably must continue so to do all the winter. Even when the snow has beat vehemently, the people have disregarded it, and continued on the spot as still as night, till the service was concluded." But these ardent evangelists, not satisfied with what they saw, longed for a further extension of the triumphs of grace. The letter concludes:—"Could we extend our labours further to the south, I trust they would not be in vain, as there is a long barren wilderness from Montgomeryshire through Radnorshire, Glamorganshire, &c., where there is little hope of good being done but through the instrumentality of Welsh preachers.

More labourers must be sent into Carnarvonshire and Anglesea next year."

The Irish Mission was still prosecuted with zeal and success. The attention of the missionaries this year was first directed to the districts of country where the rebellion had raged with the greatest violence. Graham and Ouseley passed through Wicklow, Wexford, Kildare, Carlow, and Kilkenny, preaching the Gospel in the very streets which had been drenched with human blood. Their first visit to Enniscorthy was attended with signal success. Mounted on horses, they proceeded to the principal streets; crowds gathered around them; the first hymn had a wonderful effect; and the word was with power. Some of the blessed fruits of that day's preaching were perceptible long afterward. The missionaries say of this journey, "We preached nineteen times in the streets of sixteen different towns, and in the houses, both in them and in the country." The great power of the priests was roused into opposition. They warned and threatened the people against attending preaching, inflicted penances on those who had done so, and rode through the congregations, and dispersed as many as possible by a liberal application of the horsewhip.

Success of the Irish missionaries on the scene of the late rebellion.

Yet the missionaries persevered in their work, in which, indeed, success and persecution were so blended, that they were just able to hold on their way. "We preached," say they, "in the streets of Wexford; the people were awed into the most uncommon attention, and at night the house was filled, when we had deep attention, and an appearance of much good. In short, the Lord opened our way, till we came to Kilkenny; but here indeed they seemed bent on murdering us in the streets. Brother Graham was not hurt, but I got several bruises; yet they did me no great harm. If we had not turned into the barrack, I suppose

we could not have escaped. You would imagine the whole town was in an uproar; such shouting and flinging stones as was fearful to witness. The mayor and the commanding officer came forward, and escorted us out of the town; but they could hardly keep back the rabble. Some of them even went on, and from behind the ditches, after we got away from the town, attempted to stone us again; but they did us no harm, thanks to our God. After our escape, we preached again in the streets of Athy, and had a blessed time. The priest is quite mad at his people for hearing us; but they say they will come again." *

"I went in company with Mr. Dennin to Cookstown," continues Ouseley, "and had the greatest part of the market people to hear me. At night I preached again to a crowded audience, who seemed much affected. Next morning, from a sense of fatigue, weariness, and hoarseness, I confess I was afraid of the approaching labours of the Sabbath. However, the people crowded from every quarter. Some Catholics came that morning three or four miles to hear. The power of God seemed to reach every heart. Almost the whole congregation, both men and women, were in tears. I hope this seed-time will, through the mercy of Him that waters the furrows of the field, be followed by a glorious harvest. From thence we went to Colzisland, and preached at three o'clock; hundreds came together, among whom were many Catholics. The rain came very heavily upon us about the middle of the discourse, so that we were obliged to adjourn to a large house, and as many as it would contain got in, and then I again resumed my subject. Many cried earnestly for mercy: I trust much good was done. We had another meeting at night, in which I exhorted; and

* Gideon Ouseley s Life, p. 117.

notwithstanding the labours of the day, I found myself much stronger and in better health than I was in the morning. On Monday I came to the Charlemount Circuit. The day was cold and stormy, yet the people came in crowds. The Catholics, some of whom had heard us in the markets, determined to hear us again. I was very feeble, but the power of God was great among the people. We all wept together, while in an open garden I preached from Acts ii. 37: 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' All prejudice seemed to fly away; but the rain prevented us from continuing the meeting. From thence I returned to Red-hill, in the county of Cavan, and preached in the market of Belly-hays to an attentive multitude, the cry of whom was, ''T is all true;—' t is all true!' The week I stayed in this county I had blessed powerful meetings. At Cloonkee, the people were deeply affected, amongst whom were some Catholics. Most of the inhabitants of that village followed me to Mr. Little's the next Sabbath, and wept sore. Some that had grown careless were again revived. There was a great breaking down in Belturbet on the Sabbath morning: particularly a young man who was a Catholic, and had been in the army, after crying for mercy, stood up and testified that the Lord had in mercy pardoned all his sins."

Renewed persecution in Jamaica.

The progress of the Gospel in the West Indies provoked further persecution. Jamaica was again the scene of action. Mr. Williams, a pious and excellent man of colour, was sent to prison for singing hymns and praying with Negroes. Mr. Campbell, a missionary from England, was also imprisoned, on the pretext of not having obtained a licence on the island. He was afterward released, and obtained a licence to preach, but the old prosecution was revived. The enemies to missionary operations

pretended to have discovered that he had not only exposed himself to imprisonment, but to a fine of £100, for preaching before he had obtained his licence. He was obliged to leave the island, and with difficulty made his escape.

About the year 1780 a pious couple, Thomas and Frances Allen, lived at Brompton, and had Methodist preaching in their house. But, on the death of Thomas, Frances was obliged to remove from the village. She was so much affected at the consequent removal of the preaching from the place, that, on leaving, she actually knelt down in the street, and prayed that God would raise up some of the Cayley family to bring back the Gospel to Brompton. The poor woman seemed to think that no influence less than that of this wealthy house could accomplish what she so much desired. Her prayer was answered in the conversion of the Lady Cayley, who frequently used to say, that she was converted in answer to Frances Allen's prayer.

Conversion of Lady Cayley.

Lady Cayley was the widow of Sir Thomas Cayley, baronet, of Brompton Green, Yorkshire. She lived until fifty-two years of age "in the usual follies of the world, in complete ignorance of God and His Christ." She was then deeply convinced of sin, while in an assembly room. Her mind was changed in an instant; all the surrounding scenes in which she had found pleasure, seemed at once madness and folly. The faultiness of her past life was deeply impressed on her mind. She observes, "If I had cried out, 'What must I do to be saved?' none around me could have answered the inquiry." She resolved on an entire change of life, and to seek refuge in a careful perusal of the Bible and in prayer. She read all the books on divinity which she could obtain, in order to understand the way of the Lord. But the more she read, the more her trouble increased; a tempest raged in

her breast. Whilst on a visit to her friends in Ireland, she was thrown into the company of a serious lady, to whom she mentioned her painful state, and asked what books she should read. The lady mentioned Wesley's Sermons: "Sermons!" she exclaimed, "I have read sermons till I am sick of them." She was, however, induced to procure these discourses, and, before she had read the first volume, learned what she had never known before, the way of salvation by faith in Christ. For eight months from the time of her conviction this devout lady never felt relieved from a sense of danger, except whilst engaged in prayer. At length, the day of deliverance came; she was enabled to believe in Christ, and rose up rejoicing with unspeakable joy. Twenty-three years afterward, she wrote, "He has never taken from me the abiding witness of His love." After her conversion, she found great instruction and blessing in the religious service at a small Methodist chapel, about two miles from her dwelling, and soon joined the Society. She continued an honoured and useful member to the time of her death, a period of about twenty-seven years.

Satisfactory state of Methodism.

In closing our record of this year we are led to review the danger, difficulty, and trial to which the Connexion had been exposed from the death of its founder, and the rapid and extensive progress which, by the blessing of God, it had been able to make. This success, for several years, involved the Conference in great financial embarrassment; but, under the guidance and support of a merciful Providence, those who directed its affairs were equal to the emergency. Crushed beneath a weight of debt, they shrank from no call of duty. The West Indies, Wales, and Ireland were provided for, chapels were built, preachers were called out and sustained; all the claims which the

cause of God presented were considered, and, to a very great extent, successfully met. Although every Conference from the death of Wesley had been harassed by want of funds, that of 1802 showed that the people had so fully responded to the call of their ministers, that every debt was swept away.

The Conference of 1803 was held in Manchester on July twenty-fifth. Joseph Bradford was president, and Dr. Coke secretary. The Circuits had now increased in number to 181, being ten more than last year.* The Conference of 1803.

A few matters of interest are dealt with in the Minutes. The Methodists, as a body, have ever followed their venerated founder in his loyalty to the crown, not in name only, but heartily, and without reserve, except that imposed by a good conscience, a case which can scarcely occur, except by a misinterpretation of the law, or a violation of its spirit and meaning. Hence the Methodists, as a whole, have always been rigid in their obedience, not merely to the letter of the statutes, but to their meaning and intent. The law had properly and justly granted to all persons licensed to preach under the Toleration Act, exemption from constrained military service, and some other public duties. This placed every minister of religion, having a congregation of souls, on the same footing. But Methodist local preachers might obtain a licence, and claim the same exemption. This course, however, was regarded by the Connexion generally as inconsistent toward the government, who never contemplated placing in the same category as ministers separated unto the Its transactions.

* Castle Donington and Ayr ceased to be Circuits; Dover, Witney, Camelford, Merthyr Tydvil, Wrexham, Carnarvon, Congleton, Wigan, Grantham, Loughborough, Belper, and Brough, became Circuits.

Gospel, merchants, artisans, or labourers, merely because they occasionally preached on the Sabbath. It was also regarded as unjust toward their fellow-citizens, whose chance of service would be increased by such exemption.

The London Christmas Quarterly Meeting, as representing the leading Circuit in the Connexion, thought it expedient to raise and settle this question, as far as their jurisdiction extended. A preamble setting forth the case, and a series of resolutions, were agreed upon, for the guidance of members in that Circuit.* These resolutions were brought

* "It was stated that several private individuals had, in various parts of the kingdom, obtained licences for preaching under the Toleration Act, and had abused the privileges of such licences, by claiming exemption from civil and military offices, to the manifest prejudice of their fellow-citizens, to the injury of the state, and to the great scandal of religion.

"In order, therefore, to repress such practices as much as lies in this meeting, and to prevent improper persons from becoming preachers or teachers, resolved unanimously,—

"1. That if any member of the Methodist Society in this Circuit apply to the Quarter Sessions for a license to preach, without being approved as a preacher by the Quarterly Meeting, as expressed by the seventh section of the Large Minutes of the Methodist Conference, printed in 1797, such person shall be expelled the Society.

"2. That if any member of the Methodist Society in this Circuit, who may already have obtained a licence contrary to the last resolution, shall attempt to claim any exemption from offices by virtue of such licence, such person shall be expelled from the Society.

"3. That it is the opinion of this meeting, that the regularly appointed *local preachers*, or persons who preach occasionally, and follow trades and other callings, are a very useful and valuable body of men; but as they are not wholly set apart for the work of the ministry, it is not considered to be consistent with the spirit of the Toleration Act, that they should claim any advantage from the licences in question. This meeting, however, has such confidence in the good sense and uprightness of the local preachers, as to render it unnecessary to pass any penal resolutions with regard to their conduct upon this business.

"4. That the above resolutions be printed in the Methodist Magazine, and circulated generally throughout the Methodist Connexion."

before the Conference, and ultimately printed in the Minutes, accompanied by the following judgment:—"We highly approve of these resolutions, and do agree and are determined to adopt them, and enforce them throughout the whole Connexion." *

Committee of Privileges.

Another measure, of great and permanent service to the Connexion, and which, indeed, has been indispensable in many seasons of real and pressing danger, was also initiated. Perhaps no instance can be found in history of an equal number of persons, so closely linked together in fraternal union, who have in all the stages of their progress so studiously kept aloof from secular political action, as the Methodist Connexion. Yet it had now become so widely extended at home and abroad, and its interests were so numerous and diversified, that it was necessary to have occasional official intercourse with the national authorities. British colonial governments sometimes enacted persecuting statutes, which excluded the Gospel from great numbers of people. Missionaries were imprisoned, in defiance of all the dictates of justice, religion, and humanity, until their strength broke down under the infliction, and they sank into premature graves. In such circumstances it became necessary for some properly constituted authority to exist, whose object and duty it should be to point out such iniquitous proceedings to the supreme government, to interfere in behalf of the victims of oppression, and endeavour to deliver them. And the propriety of watching over the interests of religion in respect of our own national legislation, and the necessity of occasionally defending connexional property by recourse to law, all pointed in the same direction.

* Minutes, vol. ii., p. 185.

The subject was fully considered by this Conference, and the following Minutes give the important result:—"*Q.* How may we guard our religious privileges in these critical times? *A.* A committee of ten shall be formed to attend on this important business, for which committee we nominate the following brethren:—The Rev. Dr. Coke, the Rev. Joseph Benson; the superintendent of the London Circuit for the time being; George Wolff, Esq.; Christopher Sundius, Esq.; Joseph Butterworth, Esq.; Mr. Robert Middleton; Mr. Joseph Bulmer; the general steward for the London Circuit for the time being; and Thomas Thompson, Esq., of Hull. N.B. 1. We appoint Mr. Allan, of London Street, London, our general solicitor. 2. The committee for the purposes above mentioned are to be annually elected by the Conference.

"*Q.* What direction shall be given in respect of law-suits? *A.* The committee mentioned in the preceding Minutes shall be consulted previously to the commencement of any law-suit, on the part of the whole or any part of the Connexion. And if any law-suit be commenced in future before the above committee be consulted, and their approbation be obtained, the Conference and Connexion at large shall not be responsible for any expenses incurred by such law-suit."

Thirty-five Societies obtained leave to have the sacraments administered, and consent was given for the erection of thirty-two new chapels, and collections were allowed to be made, within prescribed limits, on behalf of twenty-two chapels which were in need.

The obituaries of this Conference contain no name of note, but the character and piety of the departed demand that they should not be passed over in silence.—John Peacock, upright, useful, and diligent, faithfully served

the Connexion thirty-six years.—WILLIAM PERCIVAL, whose "animated manner and feeling address in the pulpit," and "open, friendly way of conversation with people, made him acceptable wherever he went, travelled with a fair character thirty years."—CHARLES KYTE, "firmly attached to the Methodist discipline," "a good preacher," and "generally useful in all his Circuits," said in his last affliction, "I never weep for sorrow, but often for joy: Christ is everything; I used to do His work with pleasure;" and finished a seventeen years' ministry exclaiming, "Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him!" —JOHN SAUNDERSON, whose "ardent zeal was accompanied with humility sweetened by love, and directed by knowledge," was "a devout man, and one that feared God, and prayed to Him alway." "I have been looking backward, and forward," said he just before his departure, "and I find not only *peace*, but *joy*."—JOHN BURKENHEAD laboured two years in Antigua, and was "carried off by putrid fever." So forgiving was he, that when dangerously stabbed by a soldier, he pleaded that the culprit might not be punished, and obtained his pardon.—PHILIP DEBELL, a young man whose "soul was on fire with holy zeal for the glory of God," was the "first Methodist missionary who died in the Island of Saint Christopher's." "Five missionaries and an old friend carried him to the grave, attended by three clergymen," and followed by a large crowd of sincere mourners. He "died blessing and praising God that he went to the West Indies."—SAMUEL BATES travelled only a short time, but "for the greater part of his life preached the Gospel in a local capacity with great acceptance."—JOSEPH ANDERSON, a "young man of great seriousness, deep piety, and promising talents," finished his eight years' ministry saying,

"God knows I have used my little efforts, through His grace, that I might please Him. The blood of Jesus is all. I love God. I love His people."—"Damp beds and long rides" cut short the promising career of WILLIAM JACKSON, and brought him to his grave declaring, "Christ is precious! Christ is precious!"

To supply the places of these nine standard-bearers who had fallen, and of six others who had departed from the work, and to meet the growing demands for more labourers, only twenty-eight young men were received on ministerial probation.

It is well known that in the early history of Methodism Mrs. Fletcher, Mrs. Crosby, and other eminently pious and gifted females, frequently exercised their gifts, not only in prayer and exhortation, but in preaching. This practice was continued and encouraged by some preachers even till this time, when, in the judgment of many of their brethren, the necessity of the case, if it previously existed, had passed away. This led to the question, "Should women be allowed to preach among us?" The following judgment was given in reply:—"We are of opinion that, in general, they ought not. 1. Because a vast majority of our people are opposed to it, 2. Because their preaching does not at all seem necessary, there being a sufficiency of preachers whom God has accredited to supply all the places in our Connexion with regular preaching. But if any woman among us thinks she has an extraordinary call from God to speak in public, (and we are sure it must be an *extraordinary* call that can authorize it,) we are of opinion she should, in general, address her *own sex*, and *those only*. And upon this condition alone should any woman be permitted to preach in any part of our Connexion; and, when so permitted, it

should be under the following regulations :—1. They shall not preach in the Circuit where they reside, until they have obtained the approbation of the superintendent and a Quarterly Meeting. 2. Before they go into any other Circuit to preach, they shall have a *written* invitation from the superintendent of such Circuit, and a recommendatory note from the superintendent of their own Circuit."

Complaints are made in the Minutes of this year as to the defective observance of discipline in some Circuits, and means are recommended for preventing a repetition of the evil. A collection was ordered to be made in all the chapels of the Connexion, in the course of the year, in support of the Missions.

It is very desirable to give a clear exhibition, from time to time, of the progress of Methodism, and of its mode of action. Without some particular information of this kind, general readers will form no conception of the religious apparatus which it provided for the instruction and salvation of the people; and the Methodists of the present day may well look with astonishment at the magnitude of many of the Circuits, and the range of operations which were then carried on within their limits. Some proximate idea of these particulars may be formed by a glance at the accompanying Plan of the London Circuit for the last three months of 1803; when this portion of Methodist labour extended from Twickenham to Tilbury, and from Mitcham to Barnet.*

* "The London Circuit," says Adam Clarke, referring to a period two years later, "was then very extensive, embracing what now constitutes five or six Circuits. It was nearly twelve miles from the centre, in different directions, and twenty-four across. But extensive as it was, I always made it a point to walk home after preaching at night, that I might be near the seat of the machinery, and have it always under my eye. I was even in

Two additional Welsh missionary preachers, Thomas Roberts of Bangor, and William Jones of Llanilidan, were now appointed. This field of labour was consequently divided into three Circuits, and the preachers distributed as follows:—RUTHIN: Owen Davies, Edward Jones, John Maurice, John Jones, Thomas Roberts. CARNARVON: John Hughes, William Jones. LIVERPOOL: John Bryan, Welsh missionary. This same year the new District, called the New North Wales District, was formed, comprising Wrexham, Ruthin, and Carnarvon Circuits; Mr. Owen Davies being appointed chairman. The prosperity which had previously crowned these evangelical labours was rendered more abundant with the increase of labourers. Toward the end of April, 1804, Mr. Davies informed Dr. Coke, "that the work was progressing favourably, that the increase of the preceding quarter was upwards of two hundred members, and that the Welsh cause continued to improve in Liverpool."

Success of the Welsh Mission.

About this time, two Welsh local preachers removed to Manchester. Finding many Welsh people there, they procured a room, opened it for preaching, and began a little Society. They wrote to Mr. Davies, earnestly desiring a Welsh minister: but not one could be spared. The rapid increase of Welsh preachers was indeed very remarkable, yet not sufficient to keep pace with the demand for the Gospel in that language.

The success which attended these labours, both in the conversion of sinners, and in the edification of believers, was so extensive, that demands for increased accommodation became general. Mr. Davies states that a friend at

time very often for the meeting of the Sunday School Teachers, and preserved them in temper and order." What Herculean toil this must have been!—"Adam Clarke portrayed," vol. ii., p. 186.

Pwllheli had bought ground to build a chapel, for which sixty pounds had been given; and that he himself had given one hundred pounds for another plot at Carnarvon, and had since begged sixty pounds toward paying for it. Nor were the children neglected in the religious care of the adult population. Sunday schools were opened, and taught principally by members of the Society; the one at Ruthin, at this time, had about two hundred scholars. Another great impulse was given to Welsh Methodism, by the preparation and publication of the Welsh Hymn Book by Mr. John Hughes. It had confessedly many and serious imperfections; yet, with all these, it was rendered a great blessing.

On the twenty-fourth of May, the first Welsh District Meeting was held in Denbigh. The following preachers were present:—Owen Davies, John Hughes, Edward Jones, James Gartrell, John Maurice, John Jones, Stephen Games, Edward Linel, William Jones, George Lowe, and Robert Roberts. The North Wales District comprised the English Circuits of Welshpool and Wrexham, as well as the Welsh Circuits: this accounts for the presence of the English preachers. Prior to this, Ruthin was attached to the Chester District; and Welshpool to the Wales, now the South Wales, District. Wrexham and Carnarvon were constituted Circuits this year.

George Lowe at Wrexham

George Lowe, who attended the North Wales District Meeting, was appointed, by the preceding Conference, to the newly-formed Circuit of Wrexham. He found indications of stability and prosperity which cheered his heart. The chapel, however, was inconveniently small, and many difficulties stood in the way of procuring a larger one: but, as there were considerable life, unanimity,

and energy in the Society, it was attempted upon what many persons thought an extravagant scale. It was predicted that as no sufficient congregation could be collected to fill it, it would, for many years, have a desolate appearance. These prognostications, however, proved baseless. No sooner was the building completed, than it was filled with an attentive congregation. Many persons, who had previously attended no place of worship, became regular pew-holders; and, what is still more important, many were awakened, converted to God, and added to the Society.

The difficulties of Methodist progress shown in the case of Congleton.

Congleton was also one of the new-formed Circuits this year, and its state shows very clearly the great difficulties which opposed the multiplication of Circuits, and the important advantages gained when these were fairly overcome. The Societies with which this Circuit was commenced, were situated at the extreme ends of the Chester and Macclesfield Circuits, with about ten miles of unoccupied ground between them. As these Societies were located so far from the centres of those Circuits, as to render their supply a work of great difficulty, there was the most slender prospect of the intermediate space ever receiving adequate religious cultivation. But when such Societies were formed—it can scarcely be said, united —into a Circuit, there must have been much difficulty in making suitable arrangements for carrying on the work with efficiency. Yet these difficulties were encountered and subdued. Three years afterward, some lovely Societies covered the intermediate country, and the cheering report was, "We have happily united the two ends."*

Jonathan Saville local preacher at Halifax.

In the course of this year, Jonathan Saville was called to the office of a local preacher in the Halifax Circuit. The mention of such a circumstance indicates that there

* Dyson's "Methodism in the Congleton Circuit," p. 122.

was something remarkable in this man's history. His history.
Jonathan was the son of poor but industrious parents in the parish of Bradford, Yorkshire. He was only three years of age, when his pious mother died,—a calamity which deeply affected his future life. When about seven years old, he was removed from the penury of his father's cottage to the poor-house. Here he remained but a little while, the overseers being determined, in spite of the remonstrances of his poor father, to put him out as an apprentice. His first master is not known. Jonathan was with him but a very short time, and was then transferred to a man who had the working of several coal mines in the neighbourhood. Here he was brutally treated, and so cruelly overworked, that he sank beneath the hardships to which he was exposed: and his master was glad to remove him from this drudgery, lest more serious consequences might follow. "When he took me from the coal-pit," says Jonathan, "my strength was quite gone, I was more dead than alive, and my soul was sick within me." He was now kept at home, and employed at the spinning-wheel, when his health and spirits in some measure returned. But alas! this was to continue for a very short season. While sitting at his wheel, in his usual place,—the passage of the house,—the cold wind whistled through it with piercing effect on poor Jonathan. Shivering from the keenness of the northern blast, he worked his wheel with redoubled velocity; but in vain. His fingers grew stiff, and, able to endure no longer, he determined to dare all consequences, and go to the fire to warm himself. His master's daughter came in; poor Jonathan apprehended danger, but persevered in thawing his fingers. The brutal young woman pushed him from the fire, and struck him a blow, which knocked him on the floor with such violence, that his

thigh bone was broken by the fall. For a while he lay in agony, and then literally crawled to his bed on the same floor, where he lay in the most excruciating pain. Meanwhile his master returned, and, having been informed that he was gone sulky to bed, he went to him, and, with terrible threats, ordered him to his wheel. The poor lad actually tumbled off the bed, and, having vainly attempted to stand with the aid of a chair, fell on the floor. Yet, unmoved by his cries or evident suffering, his master dragged him along the floor to the wheel, and forced him to sit and spin the rest of the day. It may seem incredible, but this conduct was continued. Though the master well knew the state of the boy's limb, no surgeon was sent for to set it. He was compelled to work; and used, as he lay in bed at night, to hold the broken bone with his hands as nearly in its place as possible. That he did not die under such treatment is really wonderful. His recovery was protracted and tedious: indeed, he was never fully delivered from the consequences of this cruelty. Jonathan spent three or four years under this inhospitable roof, until his master, weary of his charge, applied to the overseers to be relieved. Seeing that such a poor cripple was fit for no place but the workhouse, Jonathan was once more received within its walls.

Happily the master of the house was a kind-hearted man, and interested himself in favour of the poor lad. With nutritious diet, and frequent cold bathing, he was soon restored to health, although with a permanently deformed and diminutive body. An old inmate of the workhouse taught him to read; and having a great thirst for knowledge, Jonathan eagerly acquired all that his poor preceptor could impart. With recovered health, he gladly laboured beyond the usual hours, and earned a

small pittance, which, with the kindly gifts of those who pitied his misfortunes, enabled him to attend an evening school, where he learned to write a fair hand and cast accounts.

As soon as Jonathan could walk without a crutch, he longed to learn some way of earning his bread. His case was known to the parish overseer, a pious Methodist leader. He took Jonathan into his house, and taught him the business of a warper. Here, also, he was favoured with the means of grace. When able to provide for his own maintenance, he engaged himself as a warper in a factory near Halifax, where he resided. There he was brought to God under the ministry of Benson, united himself to the Methodist Society, became a new man, and started on a long career of piety and usefulness. As a prayer-leader, he was very successful. Travelling in all weathers over bleak hills, he sought out people for whom no man cared, and led them to the throne of grace. One who knew him intimately affirms, "It is not too much to say, that no man living in the district (the neighbourhood of Halifax) has been in labours more abundant." After labouring as a prayer-leader fourteen years, he was appointed the leader of a Class,—a charge which he took with fear and trembling, and not without a renewed act of self-dedication to God. In 1803, when forty-three years of age, at the request of the superintendent, he reluctantly consented to become a local preacher. The result refuted his misgivings. He almost immediately became highly and deservedly popular, and sustained this popularity throughout a lengthened course of labour. Hundreds in Halifax and the neighbouring Circuits will never forget his solemn admonitions, his impressive cautions, his appropriate and original ideas. His talents eminently fitted him for the

Conversion, piety, and usefulness.

missionary platform; and there, perhaps, he shone to the best advantage, delivering speeches to which the most eminent ministers listened with satisfaction, and which they remember with pleasure.* How marvellous are the ways of God! Who would have thought, from the early years of Jonathan Saville, that his life would be crowned with such happiness, usefulness, and honour? †

Methodism still had to endure literary opposition, which now came mainly from Ireland. The Rev. John Walker, Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, published a pamphlet, in which he most severely condemns Methodism and the Methodists; but his allegations possessed no novelty. They were precisely what had been urged by Toplady, Hill, Berridge, and others, and had been many times refuted. Alexander Knox wrote him a letter explaining the subject, and objecting to the views in the pamphlet. Mr. Walker's effusion scarcely merits notice. He was soon afterwards expelled from his fellowship for writing against the character and ritual of his own Church.

Methodism opposed by Dr. William Hale.

Another censor of Methodism who now appeared, was a much more respectable and formidable opponent,—William Hales, D.D., rector of Killesandra. He was a man of learning, and the author of some very valuable and much esteemed works on chronology and ecclesiastical antiquities. His knowledge of these subjects was much greater than his acquaintance with the operation of the Spirit of God on the human heart, or the simple preaching of Christ crucified as the sinner's hope. That which specially provoked the ire of this Protestant Doctor of Divinity, was the conduct

* WALKER'S "Methodism in Halifax."

† For a full and very interesting account of this extraordinary man, see "Memoirs of Jonathan Saville. By the REV. F. A. WEST." Fourth Edition. London: J. Mason.

of the Irish missionaries in preaching on horseback, at fairs and markets, in streets and highways. These practices he severely condemned. And what is still more strange, the "Christian Observer," a respectable and religious English periodical, to a very great extent endorsed his censures, and supported the unjust judgment which the Doctor pronounced.

Mr. Benson replied to the strictures of Dr. Hales, and the critique of the Review, in a pamphlet entitled "The Inspector of Methodism inspected, and the Christian Observer observed." He showed, in a clear and convincing light, the soundness of the doctrines unjustly impugned, and the scriptural character of the conduct so hastily condemned. The principles of these censors are demonstrated to be as defective and unsound, as their censures are proved to be unmerited and unjust. Dr. Hales, in this instance, added another to the long list of persons, both before and since his day, who have undertaken to censure Methodist doctrine and practice without understanding them.

Dr. Coke's ninth voyage to America.

Dr. Coke sailed from London in the autumn of 1803, for his ninth voyage to the western world; but we have no information as to his route or his labours. He either kept no journal of his travels, or it is lost. On that occasion he took a final leave of the American continent; and did not return to England until several months in the year 1804 had elapsed.

The Conference of 1804.

The Conference of 1804 began in London, July thirtieth. Henry Moore was president, and Dr. Coke secretary. The number of Circuits had now reached one hundred and ninety-two, being an increase of twelve on the year.*

* Brackley, Barrow, and the Isle of Man, ceased to be reckoned as Circuits; while Banbury, Downend, Bodmin, Denbigh, Beaumaris, Wolverhampton, Newcastle-under-Lyne, Bury, Winterton, Douglas, Peel,

Its transactions.

The number of members in Great Britain and Ireland was 120,042, being an increase of one hundred and seventy-three; and in British America and the West Indies, 15,796, a decrease of sixty-six. Leave was given for the erection of forty new chapels, and for affording connexional aid, by means of private applications or public subscriptions, within certain limits, for twenty-four chapels in needy circumstances. Only three preachers were left on the president's list of reserve, to supply any vacancies occurring in the course of the current year.

The goodly number of thirty-nine ministerial candidates, —the largest hitherto known,—were accepted for immediate service. Among them stands conspicuously the name of Thomas Jackson, who, after twenty years' active Circuit-service, eighteen years' successful Connexional editorship, eighteen years' able professional duties in the theological chair at Richmond, and twice enjoying the honour of the presidency of the Conference, in years which, although marvellously "diverse the one from the other," must ever be regarded as crises in the history of Methodism, has just retired, full of years and honours, carrying with him into his comparative solitude the love of all who know his inestimable worth.

Seven left the ministry, from various causes, and five "rested from their labours." John Johnson was greatly esteemed by Wesley, who employed him as General Superintendent of the Irish Connexion. "I can look back,"

Ayr, Cookstown, and Lurgan, became Circuits. Mr. James Wrigley, of Gigg, was elected first steward of Bury,—an office which he filled with great advantage to the Societies for upwards of twenty years. His liberality and zealous exertions led to the erection of a new and very commodious chapel in that town.

he said in his last affliction, "with joy, on the day when Mr. Whitefield preached from that text, 'Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us,' when joy so overpowered me, that whether I was in the body or out of the body, I could not tell: and when I appear before my Saviour, I will cast my crown at His feet."—CHARLES BLAND finished his course in peace.—WILLIAM SIMPSON had travelled twenty-two years with an unblemished character. There was "something of loftiness in his disposition, and his temper was a little irritable," but soon appeased. His preaching was "not popular," but "close and well-digested; not so much calculated to strike the passions as to inform the judgment." His speech left him in his last hours; but when his wife desired him to raise his hand if Jesus were precious, he "lifted up both hands in a triumphant manner, and with a joyful countenance."—ROBERT HEYWOOD died "in a good old age," and beneath a weight of infirmities which pressed him "down to the state of a little child."—THOMAS RICHARDSON, a young man, went as a missionary to the West Indies, in November, 1802. His nine months' useful ministry was ended by yellow fever, after five days' affliction. The Lord owned his labours much, and he gloriously triumphed over "the last enemy."

The first Missionary Committee.

This Conference is memorable for having originated the first Methodist Missionary Committee. The various operations of the several missionaries, fostered and directed by the indefatigable Dr. Coke, had resulted in such success as to require further and more systematic arrangements for their government and support. Measures having this tendency were now initiated; and though they did not fully meet the case, they were an important step towards organization, and formed a basis for further improvement. In

this respect they were thoroughly Methodistic, not aiming at finality, but progress.*

Improved arrangements were also made for conducting the business of the Book Room: the most important was the adoption of the sound principle, that no sums should be taken from that concern for the aid of the general work, beyond the amount of the cash balance in hand year by year.

Two years were fixed as the longest term which any preacher could remain in one Circuit. The Committee of Privileges was re-appointed.

Adam Clarke still continued in Manchester, discharging

* The question was put, "What regulations are made respecting the Missions?" The answer comprised the following particulars:—

"1. Dr. Coke is re-appointed to the office of general superintendent of all our Missions.

"2. A Committee of finance and advice is appointed, consisting of all the preachers stationed in London.

"3. Dr. Coke is appointed president of this Committee, Mr. Entwisle the secretary, and Mr. Lomas the treasurer, for the ensuing year.

"4. All official letters and communications whatever from the missionaries shall be laid from time to time before the Committee, and their advice taken upon the same.

"5. If any difference of opinion should arise between the general superintendent and the majority of the Committee concerning any important measure, both parties shall have the privilege of appealing to the Conference; but if, in such case, an immediate decision be necessary, the right thereof must of course remain with the general superintendent till the ensuing Conference.

"6. A public collection for the Missions shall be made in all our congregations in every Circuit of Great Britain, after the manner of the Kingswood collection; and these moneys shall be transmitted to Mr. Lomas as soon as possible, but at farthest before Christmas.

"7. A regular annual account of all the receipts and disbursements shall be published by the secretary.

"8. An account of the spiritual state of the Missions shall be drawn up by Dr. Coke, and published, if approved of by the Committee."

the duties of a Methodist preacher with great energy, ability, and success. He now published a new edition of Fleury's "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Israelites," &c. The antiquities of sacred history, and the leading peculiarities which distinguished the ancient elect people, had been but partially studied; and, so far as this had been done, the results were mostly locked up in huge folios and often in foreign languages. This publication therefore, by Clarke, in a popular form and readable style, was a great boon to the Scripture-reading portion of society; a fact clearly attested by its rapid sale. In the course of this year, also, he published a very useful tract, entitled, "A succinct Account of the principal Editions of the Greek Testament," &c., to which were added observations on the text of the "Three Witnesses." This pamphlet was also adapted to afford important facilities to earnest biblical students.

Dr. Coke, having returned from his last visit to America, and taken part in the labours of the Conference, directed his energetic attention to the dearest object of his heart,—the mission work. Finding everything going on prosperously in other quarters, he thought he might now respond to the earnest applications which he had often received from Gibraltar. A regiment, containing many pious soldiers, members of the Methodist Society, two or three of whom were leaders or local preachers, had been, for some years, stationed at this garrison. They had written to the Doctor, earnestly requesting him to send a preacher to a place, which they described as a most promising field of usefulness. And he now felt able to grant their desire. In the autumn of 1804, Mr. M'Mullen was sent as a missionary, accompanied by his wife and a daughter six years old. Their voyage was long and dangerous; but storms and contrary winds were but the

A missionary sent to Gibraltar.

beginning of sorrows. After being driven on the Barbary coast, and placed in great danger, they reached Gibraltar about the end of September, and found the yellow fever raging among all ranks, with unexampled violence. All things were in confusion. Consternation everywhere prevailed. The report of death was heard in almost every dwelling, and all faces were covered with horror.

The melancholy result.

"The child was taken ill almost immediately on their arrival, but survived the disease. On the first of October Mr. M'Mullen wrote a letter to England, describing the calamities of their condition. With the same fatal disease he was seized on the tenth, and on the eighteenth he was a lifeless corpse. At the time of his decease his wife felt symptoms of the same disorder; and, after lingering a little longer than her husband, followed him to the world of spirits, and to the house appointed for all living; leaving their surviving orphan in the hands of strangers, in the midst of pestilence in a foreign land."* The child was sent back to England by the first opportunity, and officially consigned to the protection of Dr. Coke. By him she was transferred to the fatherly kindness of Dr. Clarke, with whose daughters she was educated,—some property left by her father being available for that purpose. She grew up under his fostering care, and in 1819 was married to the late Rev. John Rigg, and still lives, esteemed and respected as his widow and the mother of the Rev. James H. Rigg. But the above disasters seriously delayed the ministerial aid intended for Gibraltar. It was not till some years afterward that the effort was renewed.

The great zeal and liberality of Dr. Coke.

The Methodists of the present and future generations ought to know more than it is now possible to tell

* Drew's "Life of Dr. Coke," p. 317.

of the generous devotion and Christian liberality of Dr. Coke. It is, indeed, known that he devoted himself in life and labours to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, with an ardour and zeal scarcely exceeded by Wesley himself; but there is no adequate conception as to how much he begged, or how much he gave to the great work of Christian Missions. His biographer says, "His property, like his time and life, was at the service of the Missions; and to supply deficiencies in the collections which he made, as well as to assist the Societies in foreign parts in completing the chapels which they found it necessary to build, he expended the whole of his patrimonial inheritance. His example and his precepts therefore associated in the appeals which he made; and God, in both, was pleased to repay his confidence, even in this life, with an ample remuneration."*

But, perhaps, nothing that he did showed such real, positive, and continued sacrifice, as his persevering appeals in public and private, for subscriptions toward the Missions. Not only did he go from county to county, and from town to town, preaching and making appeals from the pulpit; he also went from door to door! In his day, most of those best able to give were not so attracted by a sermon on behalf of Missions as to crowd a chapel. They had to be sought out, to have the case urged on them; and this Dr. Coke did. Sometimes he was coldly received, occasionally rudely repulsed; more than once was he called a vagrant, and threatened with a vagrant's fate. With mingled mildness and majesty, he had sometimes to shake off the dust from his feet in solemn protest against unchristian insolence. Yet, although occasionally so harshly treated, the Doctor was very successful, and raised for many

* DREW'S "Life of Dr. Coke," p. 317.

years a large portion of the supplies which supported the Missions. In one instance, at least, Providence blessed him, as he was engaged in this work, beyond his hopes. The incident is as follows.

Whilst travelling on one of these begging excursions, he came, in the early part of 1805, to Bristol. Consulting with Mr. Pawson as to the best way of canvassing the city, he was strongly urged to call on Miss Smith,—a lady at once generous and rich,—then at the Hot-wells for the recovery of her health. In company with Pawson he did call, and state the object of his visit. Miss Smith, with evident pleasure in her countenance, immediately subscribed one hundred guineas; telling him, that just then she had no money to spare, but she was about to return to her house at Bradford, Wilts., and if he would call on her there, the subscription should be paid. She then invited him, with Mr. and Mrs. Pawson, to dine with her. Such was Dr. Coke's first interview with Miss Smith.

The Doctor was filled with admiration at the amount of this gift, and equally so with the manner in which it was given. The lady's Christian temper, good sense, and piety, when he dined with her, so won upon him, that he began to think she would make him a very suitable wife. This thought was fully confirmed when he visited her at Bradford, and she made her subscription two hundred guineas instead of one. From this time an acquaintance began which led to their marriage in the course of the year. Prior to her union with Dr. Coke, Miss Smith had lived a very secluded life. She was the only surviving child of Joseph Smith, Esq., an eminent solicitor, of Bradford, who left her an ample fortune.

His marriage.

In marking the progress of a Christian community like

the Methodist Connexion, for the purpose of ascertaining and perpetuating a knowledge of the spirit in which its movements were directed, and the general character of its practice, we must occasionally notice circumstances very unimportant, even trivial, in themselves, but which, nevertheless, sometimes serve to cast much light on the motives and conduct of parties. Few churches have had more to do with controversy than the Methodists. While asserting what they believe to be the simple truths of the Gospel according to the Scriptures, they have been assailed and opposed on every side; and they have never been deficient in men able to meet every adversary, and to maintain their views of divine truth. But they have never courted controversy. If a rash individual has at any time indulged in such conduct, he has evinced a spirit alien from that of the Body. Methodists have always been willing to extend the right hand of fellowship to all who hold the essential doctrines of Christianity,—unwilling to allow non-essentials to interfere with the Christian harmony with which religious bodies should proceed in carrying on their great struggle against the wickedness and darkness of the world.

Mr. Benson, who was appointed sole editor of the Methodist Magazine by the Conference of 1803, was a fine exemplification of these principles. Prepared to meet every enemy, he deprecated controversy with evangelical Christians. This is fully manifest from the following extract from his journal: "May 2nd, 1804.—A very unfair 'Account of Arminianism' having been inserted in the Evangelical Magazine for May, I this day wrote to the editor of that publication, and sent him for insertion a very different and, I think, very just account of that doctrine, taken from Gerard Brandt's History of the Synod of Dort. I have told him that I should be sorry to see

the dying embers of controversy revived, or the two periodical publications—the Evangelical and the Methodist Magazines—made the vehicles of strife and contention; yet, that if such articles are inserted in the Evangelical Magazine as that here referred to, controversy is inevitable, as we neither distrust the goodness of our cause, nor fear the want of materials for its defence."*

Since the eminently pious and useful Fletcher had passed away to his reward, several notices of his labours and character had appeared in print. Wesley had published a narrative of his life; Mrs. Fletcher, an account of his death and character; and the Rev. Mr. Gilpin had referred to him at length in his notes in the "Portrait of St. Paul." But none of these—nor, indeed, all of them united—was regarded as such a full and connected biography, as was worthy of his character, and required by the church. At the instance of his widow, therefore, the Conference of 1801 requested Benson to prepare a suitable Life of Fletcher. This work is all that might have been expected from the high qualifications of the author. Intimately acquainted with the subject of his narrative, fully conversant with those great elements of the Christian faith which he so ably defended, as well as qualified by deep and enlightened piety to appreciate his holy religious experience, Benson produced a "Life" worthy of that eminent minister, and adapted to perpetuate in the church a knowledge of his character and usefulness.

Benson's Life of Fletcher.

Labours and success of the Irish missionaries.

The Irish missionaries were favoured to pursue their course of pious toil without much opposition. Graham and Ouseley passed through the counties of Wicklow and Wexford, preaching with acceptance and success. Referring to this period, Ouseley says, "I heard of a few

* Macdonald's "Life of Benson," p. 397.

Catholics over here who were stirred up to read the Bible. I hope the little hand will become a great cloud. A few days ago I was talking to a lady from the county of Kerry, a part that we only visited once, and that about two-and-a-half years since: she told me of two Catholics near the little village she lived in who had turned from Popery when we were there: one a poor man; he is happy in God, and bears up against a flood of persecution; the other, a gentleman, is now a constant churchman, though not so pious as the poor man." After this tour through Wicklow and Wexford, they went on to Carlow, Kilkenny, &c., where they appear to have been kindly received by clergy and laity. Mr. Lanktree, the Irish minister, writing in October, says, "We were now visited by the Irish missionaries, Graham and Ouseley. Their preaching in the colliery was attended with the power of God; prejudice and opposition were borne down by the influence of truth and love. In Carlow, whilst they preached in the street and chapel, the word of life was blessedly triumphant. After I had read and explained the rules of our Society, and invited those who were convinced of sin to meet on trial, twenty persons gave in their names for that purpose. In Kilkenny, where the missionaries were formerly ill treated, they were now honoured."

"The first person who attempted disturbance was ordered into confinement by Mr. Edmuns, the mayor. The pious clergy and church people magnified the grace of God in His servants, who preached in public and private, enjoying the most ample protection, whilst 'the word of the Lord had free course, and was glorified.' After their departure, a vestry meeting was held in St. Mary's church, when thanks were voted to the mayor for his manly and Christian conduct on this occasion." This was afterwards inserted

in the newspapers. Thus these devoted men continued labouring, journeying from place to place, throughout the year. A letter from Ouseley to Entwisle, secretary for the Missions, written in the latter part of May, 1805, says, "We have returned from the country to rest a little. We had much preaching in the streets these five weeks past. This is a fine time to be preaching among the Roman Catholics; they are still increasing in numbers, and in apparent good-will to hear us. I had a letter from a town I had been in, and one from another little village. That from the former says, the Society increased ten or twelve after I left them; six of whom were Romanists. In the latter place, thirty had joined the morning I left it; two were Romanists: the letter from it says, there is a great revival, and they are doing well. In another town, Carrick-on-Shannon, (county of Leitrim,) twenty-one joined the last morning I preached there. Brother Graham was then in Boyle. In short, I can truly say, the Lord was with us in all the towns, streets, and markets, and do hope much good is done." *

The preaching of these faithful men was attended everywhere with like gracious results. In many instances the Romish clergy themselves mixed with the listening multitudes, and heard in silent wonder the word of the Lord. When any of them, as they sometimes did, attempted to excite a lawless rabble against these men of God, and to disperse their congregations, though they occasionally succeeded, their schemes were frequently as impotent as they were wicked, and utterly failed to prevent their ignorant flocks from hearing, in their own loved language, the truth as it is in Jesus.

Bramwell was appointed to Hull by the Conference

* "Memoir of Rev. Gideon Ouseley," p. 123.

of 1804, with Walter Griffith and Samuel Taylor for his colleagues. Their labours were followed by great success. In two years the Societies increased four hundred and fifty members. Indeed, Bramwell could scarcely live without witnessing religious prosperity. An extract from a letter of his, dated, "October, 1804," shows the bent of his mind:—"I have had three weeks of agony, but now see the Lord working. I have not preached lately without seeing some fruit of my labour. The Lord is saving souls! Pray, pray much for me!" Mr. Bramwell at Hull.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE CONFERENCE OF 1805 TO THAT OF 1809.

The Conference of 1805.

THE Conference of 1805 was held at Sheffield, beginning on July twenty-ninth. This was the first time the Conference assembled in that town, and the first time also that the plan of rotation in use during the last few years of Wesley's life had been departed from, or enlarged. The last four Conferences at which he presided were held in Manchester, London, Leeds, and Bristol; and this order was continued until the rotation had been gone over three times, from 1791 to 1803. This annual assembly was then held in Manchester in regular succession; and that for 1804 in London. The next in due course would have been at Leeds; but now Sheffield was added to the Conference towns. Dr. Coke was elected president for the second time, and Joseph Benson secretary. The number of the Circuits was one hundred and ninety-four, being an increase of only two.*

Conference towns.

The number of Irish missionaries was increased to eight, two being appointed to each of the following Districts, and the countries adjacent:—The Dublin and Cork Districts, the Limerick and Athlone Districts, the Belfast and Newry Districts, and the Londonderry District. The number of members in the Societies of Great Britain and Ireland was one hundred and twenty-five thousand two hundred and

* Poole, Wigan, Stockton, Ayr, Skibbereen, Youghal, Birr, and Tullamore, ceased to be Circuits; while Wisbeach, Weymouth, Kington, Carmarthen, Kendal, Dumfries, Darlington, Walsingham, Oldcastle, and Athlone, were made Circuits.

thirty-six, an increase of five thousand one hundred and ninety-four; in British America and the West Indies, fifteen thousand three hundred and eight, a decrease of four hundred and eighty-six. "We have had, so far," says the Rev. Joseph Bradford, "a good Conference, but not without pepper and salt as usual; some hard words and after reconciliation.* Considering the constant and great increase of preachers, with their several interests and like passions, our now popular assembly is as peaceable as we can expect." † Leave was given for the erection of fifty-seven new chapels, and collections were ordered, within certain limits, for twenty-seven in needy circumstances.

The obituaries of this year are only seven. RICHARD SEED, an old well-known preacher, with a fair character, "finished his earthly course by an apoplectic fit," which found him ready for the Master's call:—JOHN ATKIN, a man of great simplicity and honesty, "ended his days in peace."—CHRISTOPHER WATKINS began to preach when only eighteen years of age, and zealously laboured until bodily diseases compelled him to retire. A little before his departure, he said, "O what a precious Saviour is Jesus! a precious Prophet! a precious Priest! a precious King!" "Happy! happy!" "I hope soon to be with Jesus!"—JOSEPH ALGAR travelled many years, and the Conference say, "We trust he died in the Lord."—The short career and death of JAMES M'MULLEN have been already narrated.—JOSEPH PESCOD, after long penitence, obtained salvation in 1769, and entered the ministry about 1776. Humble, prayerful, and peace-loving, he won the good opinion of all. His preaching was "pleasing and pro-

* These expressions must not be too strongly construed.

† Manuscript letter to the Rev. James Rogers, August the 2nd, 1805.

fitable." The ever-recurring damp bed brought on him a confirmed asthma, from which he endured many years' suffering. "It is no matter," said he, "by what the body is brought down; all will soon be over." "If I had twenty lives, I would spend them all in His blessed service." "I have no doubt but I shall be brought safe through." "Thank God, the sting of death is gone; but dying is not pleasant work."

Twenty-seven candidates, many of them Welshmen, were received on trial; John Robinson was "recommended to act as a missionary," and Abraham Mosely "desisted from travelling."

Its transactions.

A series of standing orders for expediting and better conducting the business of Conference was published in the Minutes, under the title of "New Rules and Regulations." It was agreed that the District Committees should have no part in the annual appointments of the ministers; that no letters concerning the stations should be regarded, unless they came from the majority of a regular Quarterly Meeting; and that these letters should be read in the Stationing Committee, and then in the Conference. Particular attention was directed to the examination of candidates for the ministry, especially in regard to their theological opinions. Several regulations were also enacted respecting singing in public worship. All instruments of music were prohibited, except the bass viol, which was permitted when the principal singer required it. No hymn-books but those published at the Book Room were allowed to be used. All *pieces* in which *recitatives, solos, fuguing,* are introduced, were positively prohibited. The original grave, simple, and devotional style of music, so admirably adapted to draw off the attention from the singing and the singers, and "to raise the soul to God only," was enjoined

to be carefully preserved. Music festivals were entirely forbidden; and every preacher was solemnly held responsible, as "accountable to God," for every thing done in the chapel, during the times that he is in possession of the pulpit. "Let no preacher, therefore, suffer his right to conduct every part of the worship of Almighty God to be infringed on, either by singers or others; but let him sacredly preserve and calmly maintain his authority, as he who sacrifices this sacrifices not only Methodism, but the spirit and design of Christianity." *

Additional directions were given respecting the business of the Book Room. The circumstances of the preachers who had families, and were stationed in the poorer Circuits, and who, under existing usages, had suffered much inconvenience, and even privation, were taken into consideration. In the beginning of Methodism, the Circuits were so large, and the preachers so few, that they were seldom at home, and their board was necessarily provided by the different Societies to which they minister. Even at this time a great change had taken place. The Circuits were much smaller; and the preachers, although much from home, were with their families more frequently, and for longer periods than formerly. Still no adequate provision was made for their support. This defect now attracted attention, and the following minute was adopted: "As we believe, a regular weekly allowance for board more or less, as may be judged requisite, all circumstances considered, would most effectually relieve them; we recommend it to the Quarterly Meetings of those Circuits in which this is not already done, to take into their serious consideration the propriety and necessity of doing it."

The connexional funds had again got into arrears,

* Minutes, vol. ii., p. 291.

Financial difficulties, and their cause.

through the rapid multiplication of preachers and chapels, insomuch that it was found necessary at this Conference to discuss the following question: "What can be done to extricate the Connexion from its present pecuniary embarrassments?" The following directions were the answer: "1. Let the rule which requires that every Circuit shall provide at least for one family, be carefully observed. 2. Let the following rule, made at Leeds in 1801, be strictly enforced; viz., 'If any Circuit petition the Conference for a preacher, and the petition be granted, every extraordinary expense incurred by the removal of such preacher to the new Circuit shall be borne by that Circuit.' 3. Let no more preachers be called out into the work than the Connexion can support. 4. Let greater caution be used as to multiplying chapels, which not only load the Societies with heavy debts, greater than they can bear, but require an increase of preachers to supply them, particularly on the Lord's days. 5. In stationing the preachers, let particular care be taken that the removals be as short as possible, much money having, we fear, been sometimes needlessly expended in removing families to a greater distance than was either necessary or expedient, from the place of their last appointment." *

These were just such measures as the circumstances of the case required, and which it was necessary to enforce carefully and steadily, on a Connexion so constantly and rapidly increasing. It could scarcely be hoped that the financial provisions would rise as rapidly as the demand for preachers and chapels. A Society which could obtain only half the amount necessary to raise a chapel, would build one; and if they could obtain but half enough to maintain a preacher, they would apply for one. In most cases, both the man

* Minutes, vol. ii., p. 292.

and the house were urgently needed, and generally great exertions were made by a poor people in the various localities to meet the expenses; but the aggregate deficiencies constituted a large sum, which the resources of the Conference were insufficient to meet. Hence the necessity and importance of the above arrangements.

The growing wants of the Missions, also, came under consideration. It was decided that the superintendents should collect the annual subscriptions which Dr. Coke, as the general superintendent, could not obtain; and transmit them to the Book Room as early as possible. The general collection for the Missions, which had hitherto been only occasionally made in the chapels, was henceforth to be made annually in every place of worship. The Committee of Privileges was also enlarged and reappointed.

The great inconvenience and expense of holding a yearly Conference were now seriously felt, and some of the leading ministers began to think of devising arrangements by which they could be obviated. "From the vast expenses of our Annual Conference," says Joseph Bradford, "its length, loss of time, &c., &c., I am fully satisfied we must make a change in our plan, and meet as our American brethren; have Provincial Conferences, and a General one in three, five, or seven years. Perhaps, we may not live to see it, but I am sure something of the kind must be done."* More than half a century has passed away, and still the good man's confident anticipation is not realized. The inconvenience and heavy expense in time and money in the old coaching days are greatly lessened by the introduction of the rail. But still, if these difficulties of the old times are somewhat diminished, the question

* Manuscript letter, August 2nd, 1805.

of abstracting four hundred ministers from Circuit labours for nearly one month out of every twelve, is a very serious consideration. How to find a satisfactory remedy is, however, the great difficulty.

Literary persecution of Methodism. "Annual Review."

Methodism was now once more subject to a rather severe literary persecution. The first in order of attack was a critique in the "Annual Review," on Myles's "Chronological History of Methodism." The reckless assertion, scurrilous language, and multiplied inconsistencies and contradictions, which abound in this article, place it beyond the pale of religious polemics. It might at that time be prudent to notice such virulence in the Methodist Magazine, for the sake of informing the Connexion of the spirit and temper of their opponents. Considering who and what the conductors of this periodical were, no surprise can be felt at any amount of ill-feeling towards Methodism. Jacobins in politics, and Socinians in religious belief, they found that the increasing influence of Methodism, in diffusing a high tone of loyalty, and promoting evangelical religion, produced a withering effect on their plans, purposes, and hopes. However much Methodist preachers might feel annoyed at being denounced as "pestilent insects," preaching "sermons seasoned with brimstone, and glowing with hell-fire," and the like, no higher testimony could be given to their honourable character as citizens, and to their usefulness as ministers of religion, than the violent animosity of Mr. Arthur Aikin and his associates.

Le Mesurier's visitation sermon.

But opposition was not confined to such quarters. There was scarcely a channel through which misrepresentation and censure were more frequently poured on Methodism and Methodists, than in the visitation charges of the established clergy. One of these, which attracted some attention at the time, was preached by the Rev. T. Le

Mesurier, at the visitation of the archdeacon of Bucks, at Stony Stratford, in May, 1806. This gentleman gravely informs his hearers, that the Methodist preachers had "no kind of learning;" while he himself writes in a manner which proves him ignorant of the first principles of grammar and composition. One single sentence will show the amount of the preacher's acquaintance with Methodism, and the relevancy of his attacks on its theology. He says, they "deny to man any liberty of action whatever;" and teach "that before the foundation of the world, the Almighty did so irreversibly and absolutely decree who they should be that should be saved, or that should be damned, and did so likewise predestinate every man's actions, and the thoughts of his heart, that all that we can do can in no way place us nearer to Him, or farther from Him."

Is it not marvellous, that a minister should feel so much concern about Methodism as to make its refutation the *staple* of a visitation sermon, and yet allow himself to remain so ignorant of its principles as to charge the Body which has revived and maintained, with unexampled consistency, the doctrines of general redemption, and other tenets of Arminianism, with holding and teaching absolute and unmitigated fatalism? Nor is Mr. Le Mesurier more happy, when he comments on doctrines which the Methodists do hold; but it is not necessary to go into detail.

Nott's Bampton Lecture.

The Rev. G. F. Nott, when appointed to preach the Bampton Lecture, thought he could best carry out the intentions of its founder, to "confirm and establish the Christian faith, and to confute all heretics and schismatics," by descanting on "Religious Enthusiasm," and making his discourse an attack on the Methodists. It is difficult to say which excite the greater surprise,—his misrepresentations of Scripture, or his misrepresentations of Methodism.

Both greatly abound; and the false and distorted manner in which the personal characters of Wesley and Whitefield are exhibited, proves the author to have as little respect for charity as for truth. We will not dwell on these matters, or refer to other clerical aggressors on Methodism; but the inquiry instinctively arises, Was Methodism the one great sin of the country? Its enemies themselves being judges, multitudes of the ignorant and wicked had been reformed and converted by its instrumentality. Yet, while sin in various forms abounded in the land, and profaneness and vice were awfully prevalent,—while even many of the clergy were notoriously irreligious and immoral,—it was thought proper to turn away from all these, to pour out vials of clerical wrath on the Methodists, until it became almost a test of orthodoxy to abuse the followers of Wesley. To us there is something exceedingly mistaken and unwise in all this. Admitting the errors of the Methodists to be as great as they were represented, other and louder calls in the church and in the world for the exercise of Christian zeal might have been heard by the clergy of the day. Erring piety should have been considered as, at least, more tolerable than flagrant sin. Moved by the unmeasured rancour of Mr. Nott, Dr. Coke prepared an elaborate reply; but, after mature reflection, it was considered that "the strictures were too severe to make converts, and too monstrous to gain credit with thinking people." They were left to be their own antidote, and the reply was never published.

Revival of religion in Bradford.

Favoured as the Methodist Societies have frequently been with special visitations of the Holy Spirit, that which visited the Bradford Circuit towards the close of 1805, when the ministrations of Messrs. Suter and Wilson were attended with a rich unction, was one of the most remark-

able. For some time the work of God had been in a prosperous state. The word preached was attended with power, several were awakened, some converted, believers were edified, and the whole Society united in heart and in determination to grow in grace. At the September quarterly watchnight, after several had engaged in exhortation and prayer, refreshing indications were given that the great Head of the Church was about to pour out His Spirit more abundantly. Sinners were in distress for their sins; and, while a member of Society was pleading the efficacy of the atonement on behalf of one of them, he was enabled to trust in Christ, and become the witness of His power to save. "So extensively, from that hour, was the power of this heavenly influence diffused, that for several months there was scarcely a sermon preached, or any religious service held, under which some were not convinced of sin, or enabled to rejoice in God. The doors of the octagon chapel for ten or twelve weeks were scarcely ever closed, either by day or night; one party of worshippers frequently waiting without, till those within had fulfilled the appointed hour of service. The regular preaching, during that period, was of necessity almost laid aside; no sooner in many instances was the text announced, than the cries of persons in distress so interrupted the preacher, that the service of the word was at once exchanged for one of general and earnest intercession. Two zealous men, of established piety, were for some time supported by the Society, in order that they might be constantly employed in exhorting, or praying with those who were in distress, or in holding meetings for prayer in the immediate neighbourhood. In several instances, lovefeasts were held in the open air, no chapel being sufficiently large to accommodate the crowds who attended from the adjoining Circuits.

"Numbers of young persons were at this period brought under a concern for their salvation; more than three hundred of whom were met in Class by Messrs. Blackburn and Whitaker, who in this important duty were usefully employed every evening of the week. This gracious work was not, however, limited to the young, but embraced persons of well-nigh every age and station in life. Upwards of nine hundred individuals received during the year notes of admission, on trial, into the Society; and at the Conference of 1806 a net increase of five hundred and twenty members was reported," * after all the loss, by deaths, removals, and other causes, had been made up.

Progress of the Irish Mission.

The Irish Mission still went on prosperously, and was favoured by several pious clergymen. The Rev. Thomas Kelly greatly aided Ouseley by a present of several hundred copies of a tract, containing extracts from the Life and Epistles of Peter, with others of a similar character. These he distributed to the congregations after preaching. They were read by the poor Papists with eagerness and delight, and rendered very useful.

In a part of Leinster, to the south of Dublin, good success followed the labours of the missionaries. In one Circuit alone, more than a hundred members were added to the Society. Many of these had been Romanists, but were not ashamed, after their conversion, to maintain their profession of godliness, although exposed to great contumely and persecution. Although so favoured by the Divine blessing, the work was not carried on without much opposition, and the missionaries were frequently placed in great peril. In the autumn of 1805, Ouseley commenced preaching in the streets of Carlow, on the Lord's day, before the church congregation had reached the place where

* Stamp's "Methodism in Bradford," p. 86.

he stood. The streets were filled with country labourers, who, as is common in that part of Ireland, crowded into town, with their reaping-hooks over their shoulders, to look for employment. Several rushed on Ouseley, determined to destroy him. A friendly man, a saddler, near whose house he stood, opened the lower half of his shop-door, and dragged him in from the mob. In a short time the military marched from the church, when he re-commenced, and preached to an attentive congregation.

In the county of Cavan, Ouseley had much encouragement. Crowds attended the preaching in the markets, fairs, and other places. While rain, and sometimes snow, descended, hundreds stood patiently listening to the word of life. But the thirst for hearing, and respect for the preacher, produced results which the missionary thought much more remarkable than their patiently braving the inclemency of the weather. "It is now come to this," he writes, "that they can calmly, and without the least symptom of displeasure, hear the most profound mysteries and peculiarities of their religion opened up and exposed, supposing it to be done in love and tenderness." If it were not so serious a matter, it would be amusing to think of the mysteries which he would thus open up with tenderness and love. "He would reason with them, and they would bear it, that no frail sinner or mortal man could create Christ of a bit of bread; that it is all invention and finesse to obtain power, honour, and profit; and that no informed priest believed a single tittle of what he himself taught. Such were the powerful arguments used by him on some occasions, and delivered in such a torrent of reasoning, with tears streaming down his cheeks, that it was absolutely irresistible."

It is scarcely possible to detail Ouseley's incessant

labours in any language but his own. "In the town of Belturbet," he says, "a few days ago, we held six different meetings, which engaged us from morning till eleven o'clock at night. At three of these we preached to vast congregations in the market-house; two were Class-meetings, and one a meeting for renewing our covenant with God; when the preaching-house was so full, that we could hardly get through the people to the pulpit. The Lord was very present with us. After the Covenant service thirty joined the Society." *

Undue importance should not be attached to those special manifestations of grace usually called "revivals," —when great numbers of persons are awakened and brought to God in a comparatively short time,—as a means of Methodist progress and increase. The ordinary operation of the Spirit, blessing the word, and leading the hearers to turn from their sins to the Lord, has ever been the means of rearing up and maintaining the Methodist Societies. The pious labours of godly ministers, whose word descends as the dew, and, under the fructifying influence of the Holy Ghost, produces "the fruits of good living to the praise and glory of God," has been the normal state of Methodism in all stages of its progress; and the continued existence of this gracious power must ever be the primary means of prosperity to the Connexion.

Religious prosperity in the Keighley Circuit.

While, however, this affords few materials for historical record, those "showers of blessing," graciously vouchsafed to most parts of our Zion at one time or other, present blessed and startling results which demand attention. In the early part of 1806, Keighley was thus visited. Every time the preachers went to Yeadon, the increased

* Ouseley's Life, p. 152.

congregation, and other appearances, justified the hope of coming prosperity. Small companies began to meet for prayer, and several were brought into the liberty of the children of God. Private houses soon became too small for the numbers which came together: the vestry also was insufficient: the chapel was then occupied: three or four hundred attended the prayer-meetings, and about forty found peace with God during the first week. One remarkable feature generally attending these gracious visitations, and particularly observable here, is the fact, that the effectual operation of the Spirit was not confined to public worship. Numbers were struck with deep convictions in their own houses, and in their anxiety sent for persons to pray with them. The neighbours, hearing the well-known sound, flocked in, and not unfrequently continued in prayer and praise till the evening, the mid-day meal often forgotten, or laid aside untouched. Three, five, or more persons sometimes obtained pardoning mercy in these little meetings; and the work continued to spread, until most of the houses in the place were visited with salvation.

Such a work was not likely to be carried on without some irregularity, and even disorder. There was, however, with one grave exception, not much of this at Yeadon. A number of men employed at a mill agreed to have a prayer-meeting during the greater part of the dinner hour. But it was easier to arrange for the beginning of a prayer-meeting, than to fix the time of its close. They began to pray, and under a mighty influence of the Spirit continued their meeting until night. Yet this neglect of duty to their employer did not give so much offence as might have been expected. He came, looked in, saw how they were engaged, and quietly retired, saying, "I dare not disturb

them; for God is among them." Five hundred and seven notes of admission were given to the Yeadon Society alone, and six hundred and fifty-six throughout the Circuit, during the quarter.*

Dr. Coke projects a plan for Home Missions in England.

The marriage of Dr. Coke did not interfere with his devoted efforts to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer, but rather, by placing another fortune in his hands, enabled him to expand his views and plans further than had been yet attempted. The Missions in the West Indies, and the Societies in British America, were prospering. Success had abundantly crowned the efforts made to spread a knowledge of Christ among the hitherto neglected native Irish and Welsh; and these triumphs kindled in the pious Doctor earnest desire for further conquests. Looking around for a new field of exertion, he saw many parts of England where great religious destitution prevailed,—places which, from their geographical position, were not likely to be reached by ordinary Circuit action; nor, indeed, by any evangelical agency, except by some means analogous to missionary operation. To these districts Dr. Coke bent his earnest attention, with a view to some adequate provision. He found great numbers of people living far from any place of worship, and lamentably ignorant of the truths and duties of Christianity. Yet the financial difficulties under which the Connexion laboured, and the magnitude of the measures necessary to provide for the pressing want which Dr. Coke had exhibited, induced many among his brethren to doubt the expediency of attempting any further extension of the work. The mind of Dr. Coke, however, knew not how to quail before difficulty or opposition; but rose in godly energy to grapple with every obstacle. He prepared himself to make a full disclosure of the

* "Methodist Magazine," 1819, p. 9.

existing want, with a matured plan for its immediate relief.

The Conference of 1806 met at Leeds, where the preachers had hard work to find places for the brethren who came in goodly numbers * on July 28th, when Adam Clarke, the youngest in years who had sustained the office since the death of Wesley, was elected president, and Dr. Coke secretary. The number of Circuits had now increased to two hundred and three.† The number of members in the Societies of Great Britain and Ireland was one hundred and thirty-three thousand five hundred and seventy-two, being an increase of eight thousand three hundred and thirty-six; and those in the West India Islands and British America were fourteen thousand eight hundred and forty, a decrease of four hundred and sixty-eight. The rapid and continual progress of the work made a large demand for an increasing number of labourers. To such an extent was this the case at this Conference, that, after admitting twenty-four young men in the usual way, the extraordinary course was adopted of naming fourteen others to be also admitted, "provided they meet with the approbation of the next Quarterly Meetings of their respective Circuits; and that they be severally examined according to rule, and approved by three of the neighbouring superintendents." Among the names of the young men received, we find Edmund Grindrod and Samuel Jackson. The Conference of 1806.

The number ten again indicates the sum of ministerial deaths during the year; and some of the names belong to Obituary of preachers.

* Manuscript letter of Henry Moore to the Rev. J. Rogers, June 8th, 1816.

† Kettering, Wisbeach, Welchpool, Peel, and Wolsingham had ceased to be Circuits; and Daventry, Stamford, Spalding, Newtown, Llangollen, Pwllheli, Dolgelly, Machynlleth, Leigh, Chesterfield, Penrith, Ramsey, Skibbereen, and Miltown became Circuits.

men of more than ordinary standing and usefulness. JONATHAN COUSINS was "thrust out" as a labourer into the harvest-field in 1780. After many months of severe affliction, he now ended an honourable course of service. "He thinks before he speaks," said Wesley; "he is humble and teachable. He does not aim to be great, but to get and do good:"—THOMAS MILL, converted at sixteen, entered the ministry in 1804, and fell a victim to consumption. When told he was dying, he exclaimed, "Sing praises to the Lord; sing praises to the Lord! Glory be to God! Glory be to God! I am ready and willing to go now!"—PETER MILL, of whom Wesley said, "He is not a reed shaken with the wind," ended his thirty-two years' ministry by a triumphant departure:—EDWARD JACKSON cheerfully relinquished a lucrative trade, and gave himself up for thirty years to the hardships of itinerant life. "His irreproachable behaviour, strict integrity, and universal conscientiousness," made him a pattern to all believers. "'You have sometimes expressed some fears respecting the pain of dying; but, O! fear not; trust God. He can and does sustain. Glory, glory be to His holy name!'—was his dying testimony:"—JOSEPH HALLAM, a native of Stoney Middleton, and converted under Bramwell, was appointed to Leicester in 1800. His labours were much owned of God, and there was every promise of more than ordinary usefulness; but in six short years he ended his toil, exclaiming, "Jesus, Thou art altogether lovely! The riches of this world would be a phantom to me, compared with Thy righteousness. This is what I have been living for: this is the beauty of religion:"—THOMAS RUTHERFORD demands a more extended notice than our limits allow. Converted, after long penitence, while receiving the Holy Sacrament of the Supper, and entering the ministry in

1772, he travelled in many important Circuits, and closed a long and useful ministry, saying, "He has indeed ever been a precious Christ to me; and now I feel Him my *rock*, my *strength*, my *rest*, my *hope*, my *joy*, my *all* in all!"—By the death of JOHN HAWKSHAW, "the long-neglected Africans lost a faithful minister, his brethren an active and able coadjutor, and the Methodist Societies in the West Indies a burning and a shining light:"—JOHN BAXTER will ever be remembered as the first Methodist preacher in the West Indies, where he gave up a salary of four hundred a year to become a missionary:—JOHN CROOK, "the apostle of the Isle of Man," was the instrument of introducing Methodism and fostering its progress in that islet, until he passed to his reward. In the north of Ireland, he was also the means of "turning many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." He laboured in the itinerancy more than thirty years, and died on the Scarborough Circuit at the age of sixty-three. Although much afflicted during the last years of his life, he persevered in his course of ministerial duty, and, when unable to stand, preached on his knees. During his last few months a special blessing attended his labours, and rendered them very successful.

John Pawson.

And, finally, we come to a name ever memorable in early Methodist times. JOHN PAWSON was truly one of the fathers of the Connexion. Born at Thorner, in 1737, the son of "respectable parents" belonging to the Church of England, he was "brought up in the fear of God." He hated the Methodists most cordially; but wherever he went, some member of this despised sect crossed his path; and, by the beauty of a devout life, a word of direct reproof, or the loan of a sermon or tract, gradually exerted a favourable influence upon his mind. He read, thought, reflected,

and, finally, heard for himself, and was deeply affected with a sense of sin. His family and an uncle, who had promised to "do something handsome for him," turned against him. The old man, mourning "to see him run wilfully to his own ruin," threatened to disinherit him; his mother wept at his obstinacy; threats and promises, harshness and gentle entreaty, made him waver for a moment. "I rejoiced at thy birth," said his mistaken father with great tenderness, "and I once thought thou wast as hopeful a young man as any in this town; but now I shall have no more comfort in thee, so long as I live. Thy mother and I are now grown old, and thou makest our lives quite miserable. Thou wilt bring down our grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Thou intendest to make my house a preaching-house, when once my head is laid; but I shall take care it shall never be thine. No: I will leave all I have to the poor of the parish, before the Methodists shall have anything to do with it."

The young man wept at this appeal, and was tempted to think that he sinned in resisting it. He and a younger brother, also under religious concern, now pray together in the "bed-chamber." The mother listens on the stairs, and joins them. The father follows, and his prejudices melt away. In a few months the preachers are the family guests; and an eager crowd throngs the old house, listening to the Methodist evangelist. John's convictions deepen, and his agony becomes more intense. He walks the fields, "bemoaning himself like Ephraim," and almost concludes there is no mercy for him. But He who knoweth "how to speak a word in season to him that is weary," whispers into his soul the grand words,—"O tarry thou the Lord's leisure: be strong, and He shall comfort thine heart." Hope revives; and, with redoubled resolution,

he seeks after God. On Sunday morning, March 16th, 1760, the preacher wrestles with God for those in distress. Pawson is on his "knees in the middle of the room." Prayer for the contrite ones is offered, and he looks to Jesus for instant forgiveness. "Quickly after, in the twinkling of an eye," all his trouble is gone. The Spirit whispers, "Thou art Mine," and he is "filled with joy unspeakable." Six weeks afterwards he is a class-leader. Father, mother, brothers, sisters, relatives, are all brought into the good way; and numbers gather for worship. There is none to speak a word of exhortation; and John reads the "Homilies," which are made a great blessing. "Many particular passages" in Burkitt's "Notes" are read, and he "enlarges where he thinks it needful." Waxing bolder, he takes "the Bible itself," and, in his "poor manner, expounds part of a chapter," and "much good is done." "About Lady-day, 1762," he finds himself "employed among the local preachers."

Within six months, he is at the Leeds Conference, where Wesley asks him to become a Methodist preacher. He "trembles exceedingly," but consents, and is appointed to York. The "press-gangs frequently attended the preaching, and threatened" to impress him. In Norwich, he "had almost continual mobbing." Near Colchester, the "sons of night" with "a drum and horns" made such "a prodigious noise that the people could not hear;" and finished their godless sport by "drumming" the preacher out of town. He soon rose to the most prominent Circuits of the Connexion, where he laboured well and usefully forty-four years, and was not laid aside forty days "by afflictions of any kind." After Wesley's death he was actively employed in the settlement and working of our ecclesiastical economy. When the infirmities of years

pressed upon him, his happy religion "caused him always to triumph in Christ." His intellect was clear and vigorous; his preaching, embodying all the great outlines of experimental religion, though neither extraordinary nor splendid, was generally popular, always useful, and often exceedingly powerful. "His voice was sweet, yet strong and commanding;" his manner plain and unaffected, but uncommonly animated and impressive. His remarkable cheerfulness was combined with an unaffected and becoming seriousness:—

"Not grave with sternness, nor with lightness free."

A great economist of time, and living by rule, he was never in a hurry. Not always prudent, he was sometimes imposed upon by others, and in his public duty occasionally suffered himself to be betrayed into acts of indiscretion. Holding a deservedly high place in the regard of Wesley, he was one of "the first three" ordained by him for the ministry in Scotland, and appointed one of the "Legal Hundred." He has left a fragrant memory in Methodism, and his death-scene is one of the brightest in the annals of our own or any other church. "The heaven of heavens is open to my view:—I have long been sailing to this fair haven:—sometimes the seas have been rough and tempestuous:—now Satan hath no business with me; he appears to have quitted the field, and given it up as a lost case:—It is enough, Christ died for me:—I am mounting up to the throne of God:—I know I am dying, but my death-bed is a bed of roses:—I am on the verge of eternity; *Victory! Victory! Victory, through the blood of the Lamb!* Let my soul now take its everlasting flight:—Doubts, gloomy doubts, where are they? I know nothing of gloomy doubts. Where are they gone?" "I

suppose they are fallen at the foot of the cross," said a friend, "where Bunyan's Pilgrim lost his burden." "O! but I am now upon the Delectable Mountains," he replied, "and with the Shepherd's spying-glass I view the heavenly country!—Yes,

'Heaven already is begun,
Everlasting life is won:'—

I die a safe, easy, happy death:—O, my Jesus! 't is all light and glory:—I am completely happy; completely happy;—Lord Jesus receive my spirit:"—these were among the many golden testimonies which fell from his lips, as he went to be "for ever with the Lord."

Expulsion of Joseph Cooke.

Another and different statement requires, at least, a passing notice: "Joseph Cooke desisted from travelling." He had been accused at the preceding Conference of holding and teaching erroneous doctrines, respecting the nature of faith, and the witness of the Spirit. A year was allowed him for careful consideration, that he might then state his mature and deliberate judgment on the points at issue, being required, in the mean time, to keep his peculiar notions strictly to himself. This he promised to do, and sent the President a declaration, in which he says, "I most heartily and unequivocally declare to you, that I believe it is the privilege of every Christian believer to enjoy the witness of the Spirit, as taught by Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher;"..... "I think it impossible to believe the doctrine more cordially than I do. I trust that this business will teach me to be very cautious in my expressions upon this and all other subjects in future." Yet, strange to say, after a few months, Mr. Cooke published a cheap pamphlet, containing two sermons, on "Justification by Faith," and "the Witness of the Spirit." Mr. Cooke was

residing at Rochdale, where these sermons had been preached in the ordinary course of his duty, when the complaint was made respecting the soundness of his doctrine. But when the sermons were published, he was at Sunderland. Yet the sermons were printed and published at Rochdale, and addressed to "the Members of the Methodist Society" in that town. The printed sermons were carefully considered at the Leeds Conference, and were found to contain doctrines totally at variance with Methodism,—teaching, indeed, that justifying faith precedes repentance, and that every penitent is justified as a penitent; and denying altogether the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, as taught by Wesley, and held by the Methodists. The Conference, having given him time for consideration, and finding that he had, in violation of his promise, published sentiments directly at variance with those which, as a Methodist preacher, he was bound to teach, had no alternative but to expel him from the Ministry.

The controversy to which it led.

No sooner, however, had his expulsion taken place, than the reason became apparent why, while living in Sunderland, he had printed and published his sermons at Rochdale, and addressed them to the members of that Society. Before leaving that town, he had made a party, which advised him how to act toward the Conference, and pledged itself "to stand by him."* This promise they redeemed; for, on Mr. Cooke's expulsion, they rallied round him, and provided him a chapel.

Edward Hare, who followed Mr. Cooke in the Rochdale Circuit, finding the two published sermons operating injuriously on the Society, published a refutation of their doctrines, in five letters to the author. Mr. Cooke replied

* "Genuine Methodism acquitted," &c., p. 88.

in "Methodism condemned by Methodist Preachers," in which he endeavoured to vindicate the tenets of his sermons, maintaining that they exhibited the true Methodist doctrines, and that, in condemning these, the Conference had condemned Methodism itself. Mr. Hare furnished a triumphant reply, called, "Genuine Methodism acquitted, and spurious Methodism condemned," in which the arguments of Mr. Cooke are completely demolished; so that when he printed a letter, as a rejoinder, he scarcely dared to maintain the position he had originally assumed, but rather attempted to cast ridicule on the exhibition of the Methodist doctrine, as propounded by Mr. Hare. This gentleman closed the controversy by a tract, entitled, "The Sentence confirmed," in which he fully established what he had previously advanced, and fairly drove Mr. Cooke from the field. Painful and injurious as this affair was to the Methodist preachers, and to the people of Rochdale, it resulted in an important vindication of a most essential branch of sound Methodist theology. If the writings of Wesley and Fletcher had left any want to be supplied, for detecting and separating the illusive dogmas of Pharisaism from the genuine doctrines of the Gospel, it is amply provided in these masterly, but unpretending, tracts of Mr. Hare. Mr. Cooke died in 1811, and the chapel provided for him became the property of the Methodist Connexion.

Great ability displayed by Mr. Hare.

The important tracts of Mr. Hare are not the only beneficial results of this controversy. The publications of Mr. Cooke had been distributed so extensively, and contained so much that was specious and misleading to ordinary readers, that the Conference, desiring some clear and forcible exposition of justification by faith, the grand point at issue, requested Jabez Bunting to preach a sermon on this subject. He complied with this request, and delivered the

discourse at Albion Street chapel, Leeds, before the Conference of 1812. It contained a lucid and scriptural view of justifying faith, and will ever be considered a standard work on this most important doctrine.

Dr. Coke's home missionary plan brought into operation.

Dr. Coke's plan for the establishment of Home Missions in the most destitute parts of England, was fully considered by the preceding Conference, and eight missionary districts marked out, to each of which a preacher was appointed, to act under the direction of the neighbouring superintendents.*

This was a most important measure. It carried the Gospel to great numbers who had scarcely any means of becoming acquainted with it, and sought out many who, being brought up in ignorance and sin, utterly neglected public worship. The time when this movement was made is as important as its character. Much has since been done, both by the Establishment and other churches, for diffusing religious knowledge in destitute parts of the country; but it was left for Methodism to take the initiative; and, having roused the churches to action in the most populous parts of the land, it turned their attention to the want of some adequate provision for less favoured portions of the nation.

Leave was given for the erection of thirty-eight new chapels; and for making collections within certain prescribed limits for forty-four needy ones.

A resolution was adopted, directing "the Committee of

* The following were the first appointments:—William Tranter, for Rutlandshire; Richard Smeatham, for the country in the vicinity of Thetford; John Martin, for the country in the vicinity of Devizes; Charles Haime, for the country in the vicinity of Collumpton; John Wright, for the country about the Peak of Derbyshire; Edward Wilson, for Ulverstone and its vicinity; John Palmer, for the country in the vicinity of Taunton; William Brown, for the Meol's country in Lancashire.

Privileges in London to commence a suit at law," for the recovery of the chapel at Brighouse, in the Halifax Circuit. The case of this house was peculiar, and its alienation from its original design exceedingly flagrant. Soon after the expulsion of Kilham, a majority of five to four of the trustees adopted his views. This bare majority, in defiance of the express terms of their trust, and of the well-known intentions of those who contributed towards the erection of the building, expelled the Methodist preachers, and handed it over to the New Connexion.

Decision of the Conference to adopt legal measures for the recovery of Brighouse chapel.

In this emergency John Sharp, a noble-minded man, had his house licensed for preaching, and in a most honourable and praiseworthy manner endeavoured to promote an amicable and equitable adjustment of the dispute. The conduct of the seceders was so clearly opposed to the plainest rules of justice, that John Garside, a local preacher, declared, "If we cannot support our new religion without robbing John Sharp, I will have nothing farther to do with it;" and he accordingly left them. We give the following particulars from the pen of a gentleman on the spot, fully conversant with the whole subject:—

"Several attempts were made to regain the chapel, or to adjust the matter in an amicable manner. It is useless to recite the various scenes of an unpleasant nature which occurred; but to show that the old Body were disposed for peace, I may remark that in 1804 John Sharp chose three disinterested individuals to wait upon all the trustees; (the Kilhamite trustees were then five in number, and the others four;) these three men made to those five trustees the following reasonable proposals, viz.:—To value the trust estate as it then stood, and divide it into nine shares, (exclusive of the moneys the Kilhamites had laid out in the seats, clock, burying ground, &c.,) reckoning five shares

for them, and four for us. It was then proposed that we should cast lots which party should have the chapel. In case the lot should fall to us, we further offered to indemnify or pay them for all the extra expense they had been at in pewing the chapel, &c., upon a fair valuation, besides paying them the amount of their five shares. However, this, like all former proposals, was treated with contempt.

"Now, what was more reasonable than the foregoing proposals? Had the new party subscribed large sums to the chapel, they even then would have had a plea for their arbitrary conduct. But in looking at their subscriptions, those five men subscribed only £19. 19*s.*, while the others subscribed £41. 15*s.*; and yet the chapel must be perverted to other purposes than those for which it was originally intended, and for which every fraction of the money subscribed had been given. And after the spread of the opinions then prevalent, there was a majority of the subscribers against the chapel being prostituted to any other purpose than that for which it was originally intended."*

We have given this quotation, not because it expresses our opinion; for we think too much by far, in every way, was conceded by those who represented the equitable holders of the property; but for the purpose of showing the sacrifices which the Methodists of that day were disposed to make, rather than resort to legal proceedings for recovery of their just rights.

The long delay, but ultimate success of the suit.

At length, however, after the decision of Conference, a bill was filed in the High Court of Chancery in the name of John Sharp. After the delays then especially prevailing in that Court, the following decree was issued, March the fifth, 1840:—"That, as what was now called in the plead-

* Walker's "Methodism in Halifax," p. 233.

ings, for the sake of distinction, the Old Conference, was the only Conference which existed at the time of the execution of the Trust Deed, and for many years afterward, it must be determined to be that Conference only which was referred to in the Deed. And as the trustees had not reserved, by any clause in the Deed, power of making new regulations by any decision of a majority of themselves, they must be compelled to execute the trust according to the laws and regulations of that Conference for the use of which they held the trust estate, and admit those preachers only who were sent by the Old Conference." By this important decision, the Methodist preaching was brought back from the house of John Sharp to the chapel, and the cause began again to prosper, "though great evil was consequent upon the proceedings of the now exasperated party."

Several important regulations were made at this time with respect to the management of the Foreign Missions, the principal of which was their division into Districts, after the manner of the Home work; and the appointment of chairmen and District Meetings, charged with the duty of keeping books for all their accounts, and minutes of all their business, and of furnishing ample reports of these, and of the state and requirements of the work of God in their several Districts, to the general superintendent and Committee at home.

Methodist co-operation in the formation and progress of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The British and Foreign Bible Society was instituted in 1804, and, from the beginning, the Methodists took a deep interest in the prosperity of this excellent institution. Christopher Sundius was one of the members of its first Committee; and Joseph Butterworth, afterward M.P. for Dover, a very early member. Adam Clarke, the president of the Conference, was also elected on the Committee,

and rendered essential service, by his oriental learning, to the benevolent projects of the Society. He corresponded with its president, Lord Teignmouth, on the subject of printing the Bible in the Arabic language; and constructed a scale of types, executed with singular beauty, for the printing of a Tartar New Testament. A new fount was cast agreeably to his model. In these and other ways did Clarke render such essential service, that the Committee, in the most handsome manner, sent him a gratuity of fifty pounds, as some compensation for the time and labour expended in their service. This sum he, in an equally honourable and generous manner, immediately returned, requesting that it might be devoted to the direct objects of the Society,—the circulation of the Scriptures. In recording this circumstance in a special minute, the Committee observes, "Gratuitous exertions in the cause of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and refusals to accept pecuniary returns, have abounded greatly in every period of its history: Mr. Adam Clarke is, however, not to be classed with ordinary contributors."

Dr. Coke's Commentary completed and published.

Dr. Coke was engaged this year, beyond the demands made on his time by the superintendence of the Missions, in completing his Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. The last sheet of this important work was prepared for the printer, June seventh, 1807. After it was finished, in order to review the passing events which convulsed Europe, and astonished the whole civilized world, he wrote an Appendix, which was printed separately under the title of "Recent Occurrences of Europe." This was followed by an index, which completed the voluminous undertaking.

In the fourteen years which had elapsed since the death of Wesley, Methodism had been greatly extended, the number of Circuits and preachers was nearly doubled,

and there had been in the principal Societies a corresponding progress in the provision for their ministers; but in the poorer Circuits this was still lamentably deficient. We have a ray of light on this subject in the case of Joseph Entwisle, while labouring in Rochester. Although invited to large and important Circuits, he, to avoid a long removal, and to obtain some temporary retirement, complied with the wishes of the friends in this city, and went to their Circuit. His colleague was Thomas Stanley, then unmarried. The Circuit arrangement was, that the young preacher should lodge in the house of his superintendent, and go round, according to an arranged plan, to the friends' houses, to take his meals, there being no other provision for his board. Nor was the case of the superintendent himself much better. The Circuit being too poor to provide the customary allowance for him, his wife, and servant, it had to come from the Contingent Fund, and therefore could not be received until the ensuing Conference.

The provision made for the preachers still miserably deficient in some Circuits.

Such were the inconveniences with which Methodist preachers still had to struggle, in order to carry on the great work to which they were called. And this they did with energy and success. On entering upon the Circuit, Mr. Entwisle found the sphere of labour very contracted, there being but four Societies in the whole,—Rochester, Brompton, Gillingham, and Sheerness; and these were small, the total numbers not exceeding three hundred and seventy-five. But the preachers extended their exertions, and, instead of confining themselves to the former limits, they sought out places and people hitherto unvisited by a Gospel ministry. "Never," says Entwisle, "did I see so much fruit of my labours as here, in the time." The following extract from his journal shows the manner in which this success was won:—"My colleague, Mr.

Success of the ministry at Rochester.

Stanley, is a healthy man, and has his heart in the work, so that I have good help; indeed, without this the work could not be done. Having no horse, we have much walking in lonesome roads, narrow lanes, wet fields, and, in one instance, through an extensive park in the night. As yet, we have no lodgings in our new places. One of them is five miles, another six, and another eight miles distant: from these places we return to supper. However, we have souls for our hire; and many poor people come two, three, and even four or five miles beyond where we preach, thirsting for the words of eternal life. In those places, and others in this country, the people never before heard a Methodist preacher. The whole country seems ready to receive us; and I doubt not but we could introduce preaching into every village, had we an opportunity of going. But this we cannot do, unless we had another preacher." *

In this manner the Gospel of Christ was carried by the Methodist preachers to the most remote parts of the country. Impelled by an earnest desire to save souls, they truly *laboured* for this object, and the great Head of the Church attended their word with His blessing.

Wickedness of Nightingale's "Portraiture of Methodism."

Yet these devoted men were persecuted, subjected to ridicule, and held up to public scorn. At the end of this Methodistic year there appeared, "A Portraiture of Methodism." It was no mere tract, but an octavo of nearly five hundred pages, written in a series of letters to a lady. All that the labour, ingenuity, wit, and energy of the author could accomplish to make Wesley appear ridiculous and puerile, and to hold up Methodism to contempt, was done. A more pernicious parody on spiritual religion, a more flagrant and unjust caricature of

* "Memoir of Joseph Entwisle," p. 221.

serious things, was scarcely ever presented to the world. It was written in a smooth and easy style, and seasoned with just enough of plausibility and humour to make it acceptable to the carnal and the vain. No doubt it injured Methodism in particular, and the progress of spiritual religion generally; raising the laugh, and pointing the sneer at the experience of vital godliness. Yet, with the whole case before us, every other feeling is lost in sorrow and pity for the wretched author of such impiety. The reader will remember the conversion of a Deist, narrated on a preceding page.* Strange to say, this "Portraiture" came from his pen. After being connected with Methodism for some time, he left the Society, and lived awhile, in a manner which did him no honour, in Macclesfield. He then became a Unitarian minister, and was so engaged when he wrote this book He died at Peckham, in the autumn of 1823; but before he passed away, he wrote a letter to the editor of the Methodist Magazine, in which he says, "About twenty years have elapsed since I resigned my ticket as a member of the Methodist Society into your hands. O, what a twenty years have they been! I would give twenty worlds, did I possess them, to have them recalled! Twenty years! Good God! what a length of time! and that, too, a great part of it, spent in the public defence of doctrines, which, however plausible at first sight, I find now, when death stares me immediately in the face, shrink from my grasp, and refuse me one gleam of consolation against the terrors of a broken law, and the horrors of a guilty conscience!" Mr. Nightingale then says, that if others can obtain "a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sin," and other Gospel blessings, without a cordial reception "of the

Repentance and death of its author.

* See p. 274.

doctrines of the Trinity, the atonement, and other cognate doctrines, they may do so;" but "I am compelled, as far as I feel my own soul concerned, with all the seriousness and earnestness of a dying man, to attest, that *I have made the experiment, and it has failed.* Hence, I have been driven once more to seek refuge in the blood of the atonement.—I have once more found peace and joy in believing, and die happy, under a sense of the Divine pardon, obtained for me by the blood and righteousness of my dear Redeemer and Lord Jesus, the Friend of sinners." This important letter closes with his "solemn protest against the light spirit in which the 'Portraiture of Methodism' was written. I am truly sorry for having published that foolish book; and for the grief it has given many of the dear children of God; and for the vile and wicked use which on many occasions has been made of the publication." * This letter supplies the best possible antidote to the evil tendency of the work.

The Christian Advocate's attack on Methodism.

Many of the clergy still continued to deprecate the spread of Methodism, and exerted themselves to check its progress. The Christian Advocate at Cambridge raised his warning voice, and published "An Address to the Methodists," in which he displayed nothing so prominently as his ignorance of the doctrines and practices of which he complained. He sadly laments the prevalence of lay-preaching, of men relying on their being called of God to preach,—as though he himself had not professed to be so called at his ordination,—and makes a most pathetic appeal: "Let me then exhort all pious Christians not to violate the unity of Christ's body. Will you tear asunder the joints of Him, one of whose bones was forbidden to be broken, because some of us bow when we hear His name? For so trivial a cause

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1823, p. 751.

will you destroy the harmony of this world, and thus the ranks of heaven?" The grand error of the Christian Advocate, in common with all writers of his class, was, that he saw large congregations of pious and devoted Christians, whom he accused Methodism, and especially Methodist preachers, of rending away from the National Church. But Methodism found these persons in the "gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity," and not members of the church of Christ, in any scriptural sense. They were not schismatically torn from the Established Church: their piety, sobriety, and morals were a creation of the Holy Ghost through Methodist instrumentality.

The Conference of 1807 assembled in Liverpool for the first time, July the twenty-seventh. John Barber was elected president, and Dr. Coke once more received the appointment of secretary. The preachers were most heartily received, and hospitably entertained. The three large Methodist chapels were crowded every Sabbath; and vast congregations were gathered both night and morning for nearly three weeks; and a "special Divine influence attended the word preached." The Conference of 1807.

The number of Circuits was 217,* being an increase of 14.† The number of members in Society, in the British

* The Minutes give 218; but Gibraltar, 177, is in that list, which is here omitted.

† Spalding, Pwllheli, and Hexham ceased to be Circuits; Queen Street, (London,) Lewes and Brighton, Kettering, Wisbeach, Warminster, Pembroke, Llandilo, Aberystwith, Bromsgrove, Herefordshire, Mansfield, Reeth, Shields, and Alston became Circuits. The following Home Mission Stations were also inserted in the list, and numbered as Circuits: Bideford Mission, South Devon Mission, and North Moels Mission. Besides these, the following stand in the list, but are not numbered as Circuits:—Ulverstone, William Stones, Missionary; William Salt, missionary for Belper; A. E. Farrar, for Holderness; John Brown, Jun., for Berwick.

and Irish Circuits, was one hundred and forty-three thousand one hundred and two, an increase of nine thousand five hundred and thirty. The numbers in the Societies of British America, the West Indies, and Gibraltar, was fourteen thousand five hundred and seventy-seven, being a decrease of three hundred and three. Leave was given for the erection of eighty new chapels, and for collections within certain prescribed limits for fifty-three needy chapel trusts.

Its transactions.

Further regulations for the management of the Foreign Missions were proposed and adopted. No person was to be employed as a missionary who was not deemed fit to be engaged in a home Circuit. Young preachers on Mission Stations were to be subject to the same rules, in respect of marriage, as the preachers at home. Public collections were to be made in all the congregations, and to be transmitted to Mr. Lomas before Christmas. It was specially determined that none of the preachers in the West Indies should "marry any person who will not previously, in the legal method, emancipate all the slaves of which she may be possessed; and if any of our brethren there, already married, have, by such marriage, or in any other way, become proprietors of slaves, we require those brethren to take immediate and effectual steps for their emancipation." The secretary of the Missionary Committee in London was directed to send this minute to every preacher in the West Indies, and to require a report next year of the manner in which it had been obeyed.

Further regulations were also made respecting the admission of preachers into full Connexion; for expediting the business of the Conference; and for the prompt and punctual payment of the collections on behalf of the general funds. Camp-meetings were forbidden: and no person

was in future to be allowed to hold office in the Societies who held opinions in opposition to the leading doctrines of Methodism.

It was, also, intended to have given serious and mature consideration to various discussions of the previous District Meetings concerning the education of the accepted candidates for the ministry,* and a summary of Methodist doctrines,† which it was proposed to prepare and publish; but want of time compelled the postponement of both these important matters.‡

No less than fifty-one preachers were received on trial; among whom are John James, who afterwards occupied an important position in the Connexion; and the bland, genial, and gentlemanly Abraham E. Farrar, then in his nineteenth year, and who finished a bright, sunny career in 1849, saying, "I think that there is no commandment of the law which I have not broken; but there is the atonement, and I have confidence in IT; I can rest upon IT:—

> 'In my hand no price I bring,
> Simply to Thy cross I cling!'"

Thomas Brocklehurst and John Coates retired for want

* See a remarkable letter of Dr. Clarke's on this subject in "Adam Clarke Portrayed," vol. ii., pp. 204–206.

† At the preceding Conference, Dr. Coke, Dr. Clarke, and Mr. Benson were appointed to draw up this Digest of Doctrines. They accomplished their task, and printed a brief statement of each doctrine, supported by a sufficient number of Scripture texts and extracts from Wesley's Works, to show that the definitions were in perfect harmony with the Bible, and not contrary to the judgment and opinions of the founder of Methodism. A copy of the pamphlet was forwarded to each chairman of a District, and was fully considered by the various District Meetings. The project fell through; but a brief substitute has been found in the invaluable Conference Catechism.

‡ CROWTHER'S "Portraiture," p. 81.

of health; John Kingston, who had been a missionary in the West Indies, was expelled; and the following ten "slept with their fathers:"—WILLIAM THORESBY, whose ministry was "crowned with much visible success:"—THOMAS PARSONS, whom "no weather, business, or company ever prevented being regular at his place:"—LANCELOT HARRISON, "literally worn out in his Master's service" by a zealous ministry of forty years:—THOMAS WRIDE, a man of "comprehensive mind and a good preacher," but whose usefulness was lessened by some strong peculiarities:—THOMAS DUMBLETON, a missionary whose "name will be long remembered in the West Indies," where he was a blessing to thousands:—WILLIAM STURGEON, another West Indian missionary, swept away by fever:—JOHN DARRAGH, killed by a fall from a chair:—WILLIAM ROBERTSON, who said in his last moments, "There is a blessed reality in religion. O the inexpressible sweetness I find in Christ! Tell my friends I am gone to heaven:"—JOHN CRICKET and JAMES ROGERS, to whom a few lines may worthily be devoted. Mr. Cricket was a man of marked peculiarity, and stands godfather to many a curious anecdote. He is said, in the official notice in the Minutes, to have been "a man of simple manners, tried integrity, and unaffected piety." This testimony is undoubtedly just; but the first part fails to convey any adequate idea of Mr. Cricket's simplicity of mind. We might give anecdotes which would raise astonishment, that a man, characterized by a simplicity so analogous to childishness, and an ignorance of many of the conventional usages of society, which made him appear so very eccentric, could have been an able and useful minister. Yet his talents, as a preacher, though not brilliant, were respectable; while his singular cast of mind ren-

dered his ideas original, and his observations pertinent. The great secret of his power, however, was his deep piety. Its intensity seized, and sanctified to the Lord's service, a mind which nothing else would have brought into any tolerable subjection to a course of regular duty. He was a loyal subject, and a sound Methodist; one whom none of the malign influences of the period could pervert. He laboured as a preacher with acceptance and success. A day or two before he died, when urged to have further medical aid, he replied, "It is of no use; I tell you I am going home; my work is done."

James Rogers.

James Rogers has been repeatedly referred to* in the preceding parts of this History. Called to the work of the ministry at an early age, he bore the burden in the heat of the day. Possessing a strong and vigorous understanding, he exerted himself with considerable success to procure the knowledge which his high calling required. His sermons were sound expositions of scriptural truth, zealously enforced, and rendered impressive and useful. After discharging the full duties of the ministry for thirty-two years, increasing infirmities compelled him to retire from his arduous labours. He settled at Guisborough, in Yorkshire, within a few miles of the place of his birth, where he usually preached twice a week. "This is hard work," said his devoted wife, as she saw him labouring for breath in his last moments. "Good work, good work, once for all," was his calm and patient reply.

Adam Clarke re-appointed to London at the special request of the Bible Society.

Adam Clarke had now been two years superintendent of London, the full term that a preacher could remain consecutively in one Circuit. We find him, however, stationed there a third year, with the following explanatory note: "Brother Clarke is returned to London at the unanimous

* *Vide* vol. i., p. 388–389, 409–411, &c.

request of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society; from whose respectful and polite request, transmitted to the Conference, we learn that Brother Clarke's assistance is indispensably necessary to the accomplishment of several plans which that most respectable Society has entered on, for furnishing various heathen and Mahommedan nations with the Holy Scriptures in their respective languages." In addition to this prompt response to the application of the Committee of the Bible Society, and in order to testify the lively interest which they felt in the success of that excellent institution, the Conference ordered a collection to be made on behalf of its funds, in all the principal chapels, and presented to the Committee through Mr. Clarke.* This was not the only testimony borne to the talents and scholarship of Adam Clarke. In March, 1808, he was officially informed that King's College, Aberdeen, which had previously conferred on him the degree of M.A., had now unanimously voted to him "the highest designation in its gift,—that of LL.D."

Dr. Clarke engaged by the government commissioners to continue the collection of state papers known as "Rymer's *Fœdera*."

Nor was the Bible Society the only party which sought the aid of Dr. Adam Clarke's abilities and learning. The attention of the commissioners of the public records was directed to him, as a suitable person for the important office of selecting and arranging the state papers which might serve to continue and complete the collection generally called "Rymer's *Fœdera*." This work had remained in abeyance for seven years, because the Commissioners knew no person to whom they could confide the undertaking. As this was a labour of great public interest and utility, it may be desirable to make its character and object generally intelligible to the reader.

The *Fœdera* was the production of Thomas Rymer, a

* The collection was made in due course, and amounted to £1,300.

learned antiquarian and critic, a native of Yorkshire, who died in 1713. He wrote dramas and some history; but his principal literary effort was an arrangement of state papers containing treaties, conventions, letters, acts of state, public correspondence of the British monarchs, negotiations, summons to Parliament, patents for honours, inventions, &c. Fourteen volumes were published in Rymer's lifetime. The fifteenth and sixteenth were prepared for the press, and published after his death, by Mr. Sanderson, his assistant, who also added a seventeenth volume, with extensive indices, and afterwards three other volumes; making twenty folios, principally in Latin. These records ranged from the reign of Henry I., A.D. 1131, to the sixth year of Charles II., 1666 Rymer dedicated his work to Queen Anne.

Nature and object of this work

What had been thus begun by private learning, labour, and enterprise, was thought worthy of being followed up at the public expense. As early as the beginning of 1800, a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into the state of the public records; and to report to the House, with such recommendations as they thought proper for their preservation, arrangement, and more convenient use. When the report was made the following July, an address was presented to the king, setting forth that some of these records had been preserved with order and regularity, others were wholly unarranged, exposed to injury and embezzlement, daily perishing with damp, and incurring continual risk from fire; and requesting the adoption of measures to prevent the further progress of these evils. A Commission was appointed to investigate the case, and to "make a selection of such records as it may be expedient to print under the authority of Parliament." The Commission,

as a matter of course, assumed the important work of Rymer as a basis; the *desideratum* being, "to have this work completed by a supplementary selection of such other important papers as were omitted by the original compilers." This was the task assigned to Dr. Clarke, who was recommended to the commissioners by the Speaker of the House of Commons, and by a member of Parliament, who knew him through his works.

When the Doctor was applied to by Mr. Cayley, the secretary of the Commission, although disposed to refuse the offer entirely, he felt bound, from a sense of duty, to give the application respectful consideration. He consulted his brethren the preachers, at their usual meeting. One thought it would interfere with his ministerial duties; another, that it was a trick of the devil to prevent his usefulness; a third suggested, that it might be a providential call; and a fourth decided, that Wesley would have regarded it as a call which ought to be obeyed, and that he should therefore accept it without hesitation. At length, perplexed as he was, Dr. Clarke consented to undertake the task temporarily, and to do his best to promote the object of the Commission, until some other person should be found with more leisure to prosecute the work. He presented a series of learned and elaborate reports. In the first he recommended that, instead of the investigation being limited to the time over which Rymer had travelled, it should be extended from the Norman invasion to the accession of George III.; stating that these records were to be found in the British Museum, the Tower, the Chapter-House, Westminster, the Rolls Office, the Privy Council Office, and the State Paper Office.

Dr. Clarke, although engaged in printing his Commentary, laboured in the service of this Commission ten years,

during which he wrote the reports referred to, and conducted the preliminary investigations, and carried nearly four folio volumes of these additional records through the press. He twice sent in his resignation to the commissioners, but they declined to receive it, and urged him to continue. At length, in March, 1819, he again resigned, and accompanied his request to be relieved with such reasons as induced the commissioners to grant it in a manner honourable to this learned minister, and to the religious Body to which he belonged. The connexional interest was, from the beginning, one of his motives in undertaking this severe labour. Writing to a friend, in March, 1808, on the urgent application of the commissioners, he says, "Well, I thought, for the honour of my God, and for the credit of my people, I will put my shoulder to a wheel deeply stuck in the mud, and raise it if I can."

His steady attention to his ministerial duties amid his severe literary labours.

While engaged in these severe literary labours, Dr. Clarke did not shrink from his ministerial duties. He regularly preached in the chapels of his extended Circuit, and paid due attention to the pastoral care of his people. In this latter duty, his practice was truly exemplary. Notwithstanding his highly social disposition, he never mixed up the current topics of the day with his Christian advice. In visiting the sick, the afflicted, or the unstable, he steadily kept the great spiritual end in view, and limited his conversation to its attainment.

A. E. Farrar's labours and trials as a missionary to Holderness.

The prosecution of the Home Mission work opened many interesting fields of labour, the narratives of which, if preserved, would be rich in interest; but most of them have passed away with lapse of time, and with the death of those who participated in these toils and successes. There is, however, one fragment which we may gather up.

Thomas Thompson, Esq., was specially interested in the district of Holderness, his native place. In his boyhood his father occupied a small farm here; and finding his son—to use his own words—"more fond of a book than of a spade," he obtained a situation for him in the family of William Wilberforce, Esq. By good conduct, talent, and industry, he rose to be the leading partner in the bank of Lord Carrington, and a member of Parliament. Mr. Thompson, having been brought under the influence of Methodism, wished its agency extended to the companions of his youth, and by his advice and pecuniary aid Holderness was formed into a Mission Station under the Rev. A. E. Farrar.

The inhabitants were wild and rude. Methodism was known to them only as a byword, and a subject for reproach. The labour was severe, and the work required not only great strength and energy, but much judgment, fortitude, and discretion. We should have thought, therefore, that some man inured to ministerial duty, and having some experience in the work of an evangelist, would have been appointed to such a sphere of labour. It was, however, assigned to a genteel, delicate youth of nineteen, who had been just admitted on trial. He, possessed piety, talent, and courage sufficient to submit to the requisite self-denial for his work. Mr. Farrar tells us that, on entering upon this enterprise, "the enmity of the carnal mind was strongly developed in mortifying, and sometimes severe, persecution. Tin kettles and cows' horns were brought into requisition to drown the voice of the preacher; stones and other missiles were put into dangerous operation. The doors of the places in which the people assembled for preaching were fastened by ropes on the outside; sparrows having been first introduced

The painful exercises and persecutions to which he was subjected.

to put out the lights,—a circumstance which was then, as in the primitive church, made the ground of foul imputations. Burning assafœtida was occasionally blown upon the congregations. And at first the missionary very seldom passed on a Sabbath through a village without being followed by a mob of peasantry, crying, 'Culamite!' 'Bacon!' the first of these expressions being an allusion to some early obnoxious labourer in the country, whose 'name was cast out as evil;' the other, a railing epithet, founded on the pretended belief, that we caused bacon to be stolen from the houses where we were entertained, and taken away in our saddle-bags! Patrington, Welwick, Burton Pidsea, Ottringham, and Roos were distinguished for proceedings of this character. In many places the opposition succeeded; and, persecuted in one village, the missionary sought refuge in another."

To Englishmen of the present day such accounts appear inexplicable. On reading them, they involuntarily exclaim, "Were there no magistrates in this part of the country?" Yes; but, unhappily, the only magistrate in this immediate district was the rector of Roos, who heartily disliked the missionary and his work. To him, however, Farrar applied for protection; but only obtained such reluctant justice as exasperated, rather than reformed, the persecutors. The house in which the preacher was entertained, was assailed with volleys of stones; he was obliged to fly, and had a very narrow escape. This cruelty determined him to apply to the justices in petty session for redress. In making this appeal, the youthful minister required countenance and advice. He rode scores of miles, and made many applications in the hope of obtaining help; but in vain. Not a man would stand by his side in the day of trial. He went, therefore, alone.

The principal farmers and landholders of Holderness were there on the other side. Colonel Grimstone was in the chair, and the rector of Roos on the bench. Mr. Farrar preferred his complaint, and fully stated his case. The colonel asked many questions, which allowed and, indeed, called for something like an apology for Methodism, and a statement of the legal protection to which its ministers and people were entitled. The rector of Roos had the mortification of listening to this, and to a reprimand from his brother magistrates. The missionary's object was gained; from that time open persecution greatly subsided.

The rector-magistrate, however, remained of the same mind. If any one applied to him, his first question was, whether the party visited the conventicle; the answer pretty generally decided the case. A Methodist farmer applied to him to suppress some noisy disturbances at Ottringham, which interrupted the services; but he answered that "he should employ a constable, and send the young vagrant preacher to the county jail, until which he would promise nothing." This denial of justice, however, was but a small part of the iniquity then perpetrated. On leaving the house, the dogs were *allowed* so to worry the old man, that for several weeks he was confined to his bed from the injuries inflicted on him. Nor was this wicked persecution all the difficulty that had to be encountered. Many of the people showed the preacher all the kindness in their power, and ministered to his comfort to the full extent of their means. But his accommodation on some occasions was very miserable. In one place, a bed, never slept on except when the preacher came, and kept in a damp parlour, was his lodging: in another, a bed put on the bare beams over a wheelwright's shop, with

just boards enough to stand on, and to which he ascended by a ladder, was his place of rest. But the greatest difficulty was food; all the members were very poor. A retired farmer, in painful affliction, gave land, and a subscription toward the erection of a chapel; and, in his then state of feeling, offered a dinner to the preacher whenever he came. But, as he recovered, his kindly feelings passed away; and he behaved so roughly to his guest, that he frequently gathered his dinner from the autumnal hedges, rather than share his hospitality.

Joseph Marsh at Ulverstone.

The other Home Mission Stations were in many respects similar. Joseph Marsh was appointed to Ulverstone. He began to preach when only seventeen years of age, and in two years afterwards was called to the ministry; so that, like Mr. Farrar, he entered on the sacred office at nineteen, and his first Circuit was a Mission. Subjected to many difficulties and privations, frequently exposed to inclement weather, without an opportunity of changing his wet clothes, and occasionally having to sleep in damp beds, he contracted a painful disease, from which he suffered through life.*

Despite all these oppositions and difficulties, Methodism prospered and prevailed. The ground over which that young minister travelled as a missionary has been cultivated, and formed into two Circuits. Almost every village has its neat chapel, and its Sunday-school: and from this soil, formerly so barren, men have been raised up to go forth into heathen lands to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus.†

We have already noticed some pleasing evidence of the power of religion among the soldiers at South-

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1848, p. 708.

† *Ibid.*, 1849, p. 283.

Progress of religion among pious soldiers at the Cape of Good Hope.

ampton, the Channel Islands, and other places. A pious band of these noble men, numbering about fifty, had called from year to year for the appointment of a missionary to Gibraltar; and now from another company of devout soldiers the cry came from a more distant quarter. The Cape of Good Hope had become an important military station, several regiments being quartered there. After a while one or two religious men inquired whether there were any like-minded with themselves. A brief inquiry exhibited a pleasing result. About thirty-four were found in the 93rd Regiment, most of whom had been brought to a knowledge of salvation by the instrumentality of Mr. Armstrong, the Methodist preacher in Enniskillen. In the 21st Light Dragoons five Methodists were found, the spiritual children of Ouseley and Graham, the Irish missionaries: three or four others were discovered in the 21st Foot, and in the 72nd. Having obtained some little knowledge of each other, they desired more direct religious intercourse. They built a little hut, in which to hold prayer-meetings. After a while they found in the town a large room belonging to some Quakers, which they were allowed to use six days in the week. Here they met for religious worship; and George Middleton, of the 72nd, frequently exhorted, and soon began to preach. They formed Class-meetings, held lovefeasts, and established amongst themselves, as far as their means would allow, all the privileges of a Methodist Society. After a short season, a few began to disturb their brethren with questions of "doubtful disputations." As peace could only be obtained by such a measure, the disturbers were expelled; and the rest became more united and influential than before. Their numbers increased, they grew in grace, and went on their way rejoicing.

Some statements published in the Report of "the Hibernian Society for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge in Ireland," led to a fuller exhibition of the character and extent of Methodist operations in that country than had previously been published. This Report asserted that the province of Connaught, which comprehends several counties in the west of Ireland, "seems to be the most destitute of religious instruction of any part of Ireland;" that "only two ministers in all that extensive district are reported as known to preach the Gospel." "The province of Munster" is said to be, next to Connaught, the most destitute of religious knowledge; while "in the counties of Waterford, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Wexford, and Carlow, only seven persons are known to preach the Gospel. The proportion of Papists to Protestants in these counties is twenty to one. Scarcely any of the former, and but few of the latter, possessed copies of the Scriptures."

Misrepresentations in the Hibernian Society's Report lead to a fuller statement of Methodist progress in Ireland.

These statements were grossly incorrect as referring to the clergy of the Established Church, many of whom lived and preached the Gospel. They were equally unfounded in their bearing on Methodism. The number of members in that kingdom then exceeded twenty-three thousand; the stated hearers were above one hundred thousand. More than ninety preachers, assisted by upwards of five hundred local preachers, regularly ministered to those Societies and congregations. Besides all this, there were ten missionaries travelling through the identical districts pointed out as so very destitute. If, as was very likely the case, the authors of this "Report" did not regard any as preaching the Gospel, who did not make "absolute unconditional election and reprobation" prominent in their discourses, neither the Methodist preachers, nor many of the pious clergy, were likely to be included. The allegation respecting the scarcity

of the Scriptures led to an application, as to the accuracy of this part of the Report, to a respectable and intelligent gentleman in Ireland, fully competent to give evidence on the subject. The following is his reply :—"Messrs. —— spoke of matters with which they are unacquainted. I know the state of the Methodists in Ireland something better than they do; and I do not know a Methodist family without the Old or New Testament. Indeed, at this moment, I know not a family without both. Some years ago, it is true, Bibles were very scarce in Ireland; but since the Association Bibles have been circulated, our friends have all supplied themselves, or been supplied."*

The Conference of 1808.

The sixty-fifth Conference, which assembled in Bristol, July the twenty-fifth, 1808, had many encouraging circumstances connected with it. The day before it opened two hundred and forty preachers attended the Sabbath services; and the congregations were never so large at any previous Conference in that ancient seat of Methodism. Every night, for more than a fortnight, the principal chapel was crowded with hearers; and every morning at five o'clock, "several hundreds regularly assembled to hear the word of God, and to unite with the preachers in prayer and praise." On the Lord's day, thousands who could not gain admission to the sanctuaries, were preached to in the open air; and blessed indeed were the "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

The spiritual state of the Connexion was healthy and vigorous. The congregations everywhere were increasing; most of the Societies were in a flourishing state; and the church members numbered eight thousand more than in the previous year. The candidates for the ministry were

* "Methodist Magazine," 1807, p. 89.

unprecedented in their number. Sixty-one were received on probation, including John Smith, the ardent revivalist who "turned" so "many to righteousness;" John Rigg, who ended a long ministry in many of our most important Circuits, in 1857, dreaming of heaven, and longing to depart; and Theophilus Lessey, one of the most eloquent and powerful of Methodist preachers.

The only drawback to this happy Conference, at which James Wood was elected to the presidency, and Dr. Coke again appointed secretary, was, that the large increase of preachers necessitated an expenditure which seriously embarrassed the Contingent Fund. But even here the expectation of the ministry was buoyant, and they confidently hoped that by "the liberality of their friends, and the revenue arising from the sale of their books," they should "be able by degrees to extricate themselves." The Circuits were now two hundred and thirty-six,* an increase of nineteen.†

"This Conference," says Crowther, "was a very laborious one to those who took the most active part in its business. We sat close. We were about two hundred and fifty

* The Minutes give two hundred and thirty-eight, including the Mission Stations at Gibraltar and Sierra Leone.

† Collumpton and Reeth ceased to be Circuits, and the following places were made Circuits, viz., Margate, Luton, Littleport, South Petherton, Exeter, Monmouth, Crickhowel, Caerphilly, Lampeter, Llandilo, Neston, Namptwich, Stafford, New Mills, Addingham, Bingley, Bakewell, Richmond, Newtown-Barry, Clough-Jordan, Innishowen, Ballina. Besides the Home Missions included in the list, and numbered as Circuits, the following were separate Mission Stations, each supplied with one preacher, but not reckoned in the number of Circuits:—Ipswich, Thomas Morgan; Romney, William Hollis; Hertfordshire, George Rowe; Essex Mission, Francis Brooks Potts; Cirencester, John Voce; Saul Mission, Richard Renshaw; Ludlow, John Rigg; Husbands Bosworth, John Smith, Jun.; Whittlesea, Joshua Bryant; Ulverstone, John Rawson.

preachers [present]; and some part of the time the weather was extremely hot. But a Conference more free from all undue influence and party spirit, where more impartiality, free discussion, good temper, and general satisfaction prevailed, we never had." *

In the West Indies, we find the Antigua District with five Circuits; the St. Christopher's with four; Jamaica, and two other Circuits, are grouped together, but not called a District; Nova Scotia and New Brunswick formed a District consisting of two Circuits. The number in the Societies of Great Britain and Ireland was one hundred and fifty-one thousand one hundred and forty-five. In British America and the West Indies the numbers were fourteen thousand seven hundred and ninety-six, a decrease of eighty-four.

Its transactions.

Leave was given for the erection of one hundred and twenty-nine chapels, and for making collections for sixty-one which were in need. A Committee was also named to look out for ground for a school near Leeds, when the number of boys at Kingswood should amount to fifty. A proposal was submitted to the ensuing District Committees for establishing a Chapel Fund with a treasurer in each District, from which the needy chapels might be relieved. A suggestion was thrown out, intimating the importance of establishing a Tract Society, to be co-extensive with the Connexion: and the Book Committee in London were desired to draw up a plan for its organization. The thanks of the Conference were voted to Robert [illegible]omas, "for his very laborious, faithful, and successful [illegible]vices" in the Book Room; and to George Story, [illegible]chu[illegible]his long and faithful services in the printing office. [illegible]the [illegible]omas was also requested to accept the office of general

* "Portraiture of Methodism," p. 82.

auditor of all the accounts, with authority to procure such assistance as he might judge necessary. Thomas Blanshard was appointed book-steward.

The only defections from the ministerial ranks were Robert Gunn, who was expelled, and William Heath, who "settled in business." The obituaries comprise the following names:—John Bissex, who fell a victim to consumption, after six months' itinerancy:—John Robinson, Thomas Owens, Joseph Morrison, and Henry Evans, who were all taken from the missionary toils in the West Indies:—Edward Linnell, some of whose last words were, "He has spoken the sanctifying word. I have glorious views of heaven. O, what joy! what peace! what felicity! I could not have conceived it possible for mortals to know what I now experience:"—John Goodwin, whose labours the Lord crowned with good success for forty years:—William Wilson, "who, notwithstanding some constitutional peculiarities, was a man of exalted piety, and deep acquaintance with the word of God:"—Peter Haslam, cut down ere he reached his prime, and followed to his grave by crowds of affectionate people in Liverpool:—and Joseph Bradford, the faithful friend and long the travelling companion of Wesley. He was a most pure-minded and laborious minister; loved by the founder of Methodism, and twice honoured by his brethren with the presidency of the Conference. A cloud covers the last years of his life and ministry, in consequence of great bodily and mental debility, which ended in derangement.

Dr. Clarke librarian of the Surrey Institution.

Dr. Clarke's name appears on these Minutes as supernumerary in the London West Circuit, with a foot-note, stating that the appointment was made at his request. This step was taken not because Dr. Clarke wished to retire from the active ministry, nor altogether because he

had lost the strength necessary for an efficient discharge of its duties. His health had certainly failed, in some degree, under the severe pressure of his arduous and harassing engagements. He therefore very naturally felt desirous of some arrangement by which he might have a measure of rest; but in this, as in most other instances, the course was taken rather in compliance with the earnest wish of friends, than from any strong desire of his own. Mr. Butterworth felt an interest in the Surrey Institution, which had been formed on a liberal and highly respectable basis, and was about to collect a library. Anxious that the collection should be formed under the influence of the highest bibliographical knowledge, and with a due regard to the interests of revealed religion, he saw in his friend and relation, Dr. Clarke, a man every way qualified for this important work; and believing that his aid would immensely serve the interests of this establishment, and through it the learning and religion of the metropolis, and that it would afford him sufficient rest and relaxation, he strongly urged Dr. Clarke to accept the office of librarian. After much hesitation and entreaty, he consented, and requested to be set down on the Minutes as supernumerary. He filled the office that year, but never felt at home, and left it at the ensuing Conference, refusing to receive any remuneration for his services. We find him the following year on the London West Circuit, as a regular minister, and chairman of the London District.

Persecution revived in Jamaica.

In the latter part of 1807, the Jamaica legislature, undismayed at the failure of their former intolerance, again attempted to secure their object; and the effort now made was characterized by great ingenuity. The new statute began by recommending to all proprietors the instruction of their slaves in the principles of the Christian faith:—

"Provided, nevertheless, that the instruction of such slaves shall be confined to the doctrines of the Established Church in this Island; and that no Methodist missionary, or other sectary, or preacher, shall presume to instruct our slaves, or to receive them into their houses, chapels, or conventicles, of any sort or description, under the penalty of twenty pounds for every slave proved to have been there, and to be recovered in a summary manner before any three justices of the peace."

The flimsy pretence of caring for the Negroes' instruction which this statute exhibits, is sufficiently transparent. There is no penalty for keeping these poor creatures in utter ignorance; this might be done with impunity; and was in fact the effect of its operation, as it limited their instruction exclusively to a class who had neither the means, nor the will, to give the required teaching; whilst those who were able and willing to supply it efficiently, were, if they dared to do so, to be severely punished. The manner of dealing with this law by the colonial authorities was as disingenuous and dishonest, as its character was iniquitous. The silenced missionaries immediately informed Dr. Coke of what had taken place; the Committee of Privileges accordingly met, and petitioned the king in council to disallow this persecuting measure. They were informed, that the government at home had not heard of such an edict. The Jamaica authorities, dreading the fate the measure might receive in England, delayed transmitting it till the last hour the forms of their government allowed; so that, when, in 1808, a further petition was presented, the same reply was received. The government, of course, could not deal with a statute, of whose existence they had no official knowledge. At length, however, the obnoxious enactment arrived, accompanied by an agent sent to enforce its

necessity on the home authorities. The effort was vain. On the 26th of April, 1809, a note from Lord Bathurst informed Dr. Coke that the law was disallowed. Grateful as all were for this issue, the evil which had accrued was fearful. More than eighteen months the poor Negroes had been kept in a famine of the word,—without religious instruction, preaching, or prayer. Sixteen months of Dr. Coke's time had been mostly consumed in incessant efforts to obtain liberty of worship for these oppressed Negroes, before his efforts were crowned with success.

And again forbidden by the king in council.

The simple truth of the Gospel, as held forth by those who preached it, was everywhere the savour of life to broken-hearted sinners; and just as frequently a stumbling-block to those who, like the Pharisees of old, "trusted in themselves that they were righteous." Mr. Howard was a banker of Dublin, of great reputation and good property. Persons therefore eagerly committed their savings to his care; and for a while he seemed to conduct his business with propriety. At length, he began to speculate. At first his own means were equal to his risks; by degrees, however, the property of others was placed in requisition. The usual consequence followed, Mr. Howard was ruined; and the ruin which so deservedly overwhelmed him, involved a wide circle of innocent victims who had confidingly placed their property in his hands. Compelled to leave Ireland, he came to England, and lived in obscurity. He wandered to Hull, and was led to hear the Rev. Joseph Milner preach. The word came to his heart with power; conviction of sin and deep compunction overwhelmed him. He resolved to go to the minister, and tell him all his case, and inquire what he must do to be saved. The preacher read to him from the third chapter of the Romans, and opened up to his mind the way of salvation by faith.

Striking instance of a sinner's salvation by faith in contrast with Pharisaism.

Hope dawned in his soul. As he returned, he doubted whether the words he had heard were really in the Scriptures; and feared they were taken from some work on divinity, suitable to his case. On reaching his lodgings he eagerly got a Bible, and turned to the part named, where he found what exactly met his case. As he read, he sank on his knees, and implored that salvation which cometh not from the law,—"For by the law is the knowledge of sin,"—but "which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference." This was the salvation he needed; for this he prayed, for this he believed. He wrestled with the Angel of the Covenant, and rose from his knees happy in the pardoning mercy of God. Mr. Howard afterward wrote a short account of his life, for the warning and encouragement of others. He did not extenuate his transgressions, but showed the evils by which he had fallen, and the salvation which he had received.

Mrs. Blachford of Dublin (mother of Mrs. Henry Tighe, the accomplished author of "Psyche") was a lady of eminent sense and piety, of whom Wesley said, "She is one of our jewels." She lived with Dr. Radcliffe, one of the judges of the Irish Prerogative Court, (who had married a sister of Mr. Blachford,) and an unmarried sister of Mr. Blachford, who was in a very declining state of health. Dr. Radcliffe was strictly moral and religious in all external observances, and sincere and upright in his character; but he did not like the spiritual profession of Mrs. Blachford, designated "Methodism." As Miss Blachford became worse, the kind attentions of the brother and sister-in-law were called forth on her behalf. The Doctor went to her chamber every morning before going to court, and read the service for the sick

out of the Common Prayer; and Mrs. Blachford frequently conversed with her on the promises and privileges of the Gospel, and endeavoured to lead her mind to the experience of salvation. As her hopes of success increased, she occasionally observed to Dr. Radcliffe, "She will die a Methodist."

"One morning, after the Doctor had, as usual, been reading prayers with Miss Blachford, just as he was about to repeat the Lord's Prayer, she said, 'Stop, Doctor; before you read that prayer, I wish to say a few words.' The Doctor, who was naturally a nervous man, was much disturbed by the interruption; but Miss Blachford continued,—all the family kneeling round the bed,—'Last night, as I was for hours unable to sleep, I lay contemplating my religious state; I prayed to God over it; and whilst thus engaged, I felt the power of God present to my mind, enabling me, in a manner I never felt before, to claim Him as my "Father who is in heaven;" and I rejoice still in this holy assurance. And now, Doctor, read to me that prayer.' With much feeling the Doctor finished the service, and then instantly quitted the room. Mrs. Blachford followed him, saying, 'I told you, Doctor, she would die a Methodist; this is Methodism.'"

About this time the pamphlet above mentioned, containing Howard's account of his Life and Conversion, "fell into Dr. Radcliffe's hands, when he began reproaching Mrs. Blachford for the Methodism of Mr. Howard, saying it was a refuge for the vilest characters, when they could go no further. He then took up the book, and began reading it: as he read, he said aloud, 'Well, it is so far well; he does not hide his faults, but confesses them freely; that looks well.' He continued the narrative: when he came to that part of it giving the account of his

visit to Mr. Milner, he was affected; and, on concluding the whole, when he stated his sense of the pardon of sin, Dr. Radcliffe rose hastily from his chair, and, dashing down the book, exclaimed, 'How is this? Here have I been doing my duty and serving God all my life, and I have never felt this peace;' and he went away much displeased." Mrs. Smith, who has given us this account, observes with equal truth and beauty, "A fine illustration this of the parable of the prodigal son,—'Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends!' (Luke xv. 29.) 'What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at the stumbling-stone. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth in Him shall not be ashamed.' (Romans ix. 30–33.) And again, 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance!'"*

Pitiable condition of worn-out Methodist preachers.

We have recorded, in a preceding chapter, the efforts made by Dr. Clarke and Henry Moore for improving the Annuitant Fund, so as to provide some adequate support for preachers whose age and infirmities rendered them incapable of continuing the laborious duties of a Circuit. To some small extent they temporarily succeeded in this benevolent enterprise. Yet the results were far from satisfactory. George Lowe, who this year retired from active service, and became a supernumerary in the Shrewsbury

* Mrs. Smith's "Life of Henry Moore," pp. 206–209.

Circuit, had broken up his establishment at Haddington, which yielded him a comfortable maintenance, to serve the Methodists as one of their ministers. To that service he devoted twenty years of severe labour; and when unable any longer to bear the burden and discharge the duties of an itinerant life, his only resource for daily bread, beyond the casual benevolence of his Christian friends, was about *five shillings a week*,—the fruit of his personal contributions to the Preachers' Annuitant Fund. On this humble pittance he would have subsisted in pious contentment, had not a mysterious providence thrown on his care three orphan grandchildren for education and support. Yet, so wondrous are the ways of Providence, these very children "were destined to be the companions of his declining years, to administer to his comfort, and to close his eyes in death." The maintenance of these orphans, however, was a very heavy charge, and frequently brought him into great difficulty. He sent the two boys to school, and afterward apprenticed them to the silk trade. He promised to pay a premium of thirty pounds with each, and in consequence of these engagements was frequently embarrassed. When the time for the payment of the first thirty pounds approached, he was in great distress, as he had but a few pounds left. Having no other resource, "this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." A few mornings before the money was due, the postman brought a letter, the postage of which was one and eightpence. He hesitated to take it, saying, "It is a large sum to pay for a letter;" but the postman encouraged him, saying, as it was the charge for a double letter, he was sure there was something in it. He paid the money, opened the letter, and found it contained a Bank of England note for twenty pounds,

Piety of George Lowe in old age, and providential interposition in his behalf.

from "a Christian friend in London, whose name he was not to know till the morning of the resurrection." He laid the letter, with its contents, before God, and with a grateful heart thanked Him for this succour in a time of need. Nor was this the only providential interposition which this good old man experienced. Afterward, when brought into great straits, he received a remittance "from an unknown friend in the Shrewsbury Circuit, which supplied his necessity." *

The continued progress of Methodism produced a profound sensation amongst different classes in the country. Divided from each other by various shades of opinion and feeling, they were united in opposition to the spread of its doctrines and principles. Besides the enmity of the carnal mind to spiritual religion which naturally pervaded the population, other antagonistic influences were roused into action, tending to check the progress of a sect intensely disliked. The formal old-fashioned Church people regarded Methodism as an uncalled-for novelty; a system of opinions which outraged all the proprieties and forms of the sterling, orthodox national faith, was dangerous alike to the stability of Church and State, and ought to be proscribed. Much of the deadly antipathy with which Methodism had been regarded by the avowed infidelity of preceding years, now that its profession and pretensions had been somewhat lowered by recent events in France, was taken up and maintained by that which aspired to rank as the highest literature of the country. In common with these classes, the vicious and wicked looked upon Methodism everywhere with aversion.

Yet it was with each and all of these a difficult question as to the means by which the system could be checked or

* Strachan's "Life and Times of George Lowe."

overthrown. Brutal violence, tried on an extensive scale, had signally failed, although it had inflicted a vast amount of evil and injury. "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." Grave thoughts and serious consultations had been held, with a view to interpose some legislative barrier to the onward course of this hated cause. The difficulties of dealing with the case were greatly increased by the fact, that the opponents of evangelical religion clearly saw that something more was necessary than to crush the Methodist Connexion. For, although this Body was regarded as the parent of all the evils, the Calvinistic Methodists, and the evangelical clergy and members of the Established Church, were classed with them as mischievous auxiliaries. The "Edinburgh Review," referring by name to these three denominations, said, "We shall use the general term of 'Methodism' to designate these three classes of fanatics, not troubling ourselves to point out the finer shades and nicer discriminations of lunacy, but treating them all as in one general conspiracy against common sense and rational orthodox Christianity."

In this spirit it was attempted to write down Methodism, or, at least, so to impregnate the public mind with misconception and prejudice, as to prepare the way for some legislative measures of repression. Visitation Sermons and Bampton Lectures were not only placed in requisition, but reviews and pamphlets, the highest and the lowest of literary agencies, combined in the confederacy. Clergymen, in published sermons, lamented "the excess of religious toleration," and the "Edinburgh Review" denounced Methodism as "at work upon the destruction of the orthodox churches." These labours and efforts were continued, and ultimately an attempt was fairly made to crush the

progress of evangelical religion by legislative coercion. Of this attempt we shall have to speak in due time. We refer to it by anticipation, in order to place on record the important fact, that however the attack, when made, was ostensibly directed, the object aimed at was the extinction of evangelical religion. Whether in the Church or out of it,—whether Calvinistic or Arminian,—all these classes of "fanatics" were ranked by the advocates of these measures as comprehended under the same category, as engaged "in one general conspiracy against common sense and rational orthodox Christianity."

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE CONFERENCE OF 1809 TO THAT OF 1813.

The Conference of 1809.

About two hundred and forty ministers attended the Manchester Conference of July thirty-first, 1809. Thomas Taylor, who had filled the same high office thirteen years before, was appointed president, and Joseph Benson secretary. The number of Circuits in Great Britain and Ireland was two hundred and fifty-seven, an increase of twenty-one.* Very large and serious congregations attended the various public services. The consideration of the spiritual state of the Connexion disclosed the cheering facts, that the congregations in various parts of the United Kingdom were large, and "sometimes deeply affected under the word;" that great peace and harmony everywhere prevailed, and a goodly increase of members had crowned the labours of the preceding year.

Death had again been active in thinning the ministerial ranks; the decennial number once more indicates the sum of his victims, and all, with one exception, were comparatively young men. The veteran Joseph Thompson, "a clear, weighty, and practical preacher," "strictly conscientious in all his intercourse both with God and man," entered the ministry in 1758, and died saying, "I am

* Llangollen and Innishowen ceased to be Circuits; Harwich, Bungay, Brackley, Shaftesbury, Pool, Liskeard, Tavistock, Neath, Caerfryddyn, Holyhead, Llanfyllyn, Llanrwst, Ludlow, Ilkestone, Melton Mowbray, Driffield, Ayr, Perth, Banff, Pettigo, and Carrickfergus became Circuits.

nothing, but Christ is all; all is in Him, and from Him, to whom be glory for ever." THOMAS STANTON, JOHN ASHALL, JOHN FOSTER, another victim to the "damp bed," and WILLIAM HARRISON, swept off by fever, were all useful in their day, and died well. JAMES DENTON, "a young man of great application to study, considerable talents, and genuine piety," was converted at the age of seventeen, "ministered the Gospel of God" successfully for fourteen years, and died comforting his friends with the blessed assurance, "I am happy! My pardon is sealed. Blessed be God, I am going to everlasting rest."—JOHN FISHER, a native of Yarm, a man of genuine piety, seriousness, and affability, finished his seven years' toil pointing to heaven when unable to speak, and then departing with a smile.—THOMAS LONGLEY was admitted on trial in 1780, and employed his every talent for his Master's glory.—WILLIAM VIPOND was no common man. While walking along the highway, with tearful eyes uplifted to heaven, and a heart labouring to lay hold on the hope set before him, he received the blessed assurance that his sins were forgiven. Possessing strong sense, sound judgment, extensive information, deep piety, and a ready, energetic utterance, his ministerial abilities were above those of many of his fellows. The sword proved too sharp for its scabbard, and his useful ministry was brought to a glorious, but early, close.—From a child JOHN HEARNSHAW, a native of Grimesthorpe near Sheffield, had impressions that preaching would ultimately be his life-long employ. In 1790, the first Methodist sermon in his native village deeply impressed him, and after keen penitence he found mercy. He delivered his first discourse behind a chair in his father's house, the congregation wondering how a mere youth could speak of the things of God so wisely and

so well. In the disastrous confusion of 1797, when so many local preachers in Sheffield forsook Methodism for the New Connexion, he nobly stepped into the breach, and three years afterward entered the ministry. His preaching was such as Dr. Clarke, then in the height of his own popularity, heard with pleasure and sincerely commended. But, alas! in four years, his health completely gave way, and he never returned to active service. His precious diary reveals an experience clear and deep, a walk with God close and constant.

Thirty-seven candidates came forward to supply the places of those who fell, and to extend the triumphs of the Gospel in various parts of the world. John Waterhouse —who subsequently consecrated his powers to the mission-work at the antipodes, and who died triumphantly in 1842, exclaiming, "Jesus is precious!" "Missionaries! Missionaries!"—was one of the number. There were neither expulsions nor desertions from the ministry during the year; but John Fussil and Thomas Biggins retired for want of health.

The number of members in the Societies of Great Britain and Ireland was one hundred and fifty-eight thousand and twenty-one, an increase of six thousand eight hundred and seventy-six; and in those of British America and the West Indies, thirteen thousand six hundred and twenty-nine, a decrease of one thousand and sixty-five. Collections were ordered to be made, within certain prescribed limits, on behalf of eighty-one needy chapel trusts.

Its transactions.

The financial state of the Connexion "was truly alarming, as we found a deficiency in the Contingent Fund of £3,019. 1*s.* 6*d.*" * The following measures were therefore adopted to render "the income of the Connexion more

* Crowther.

adequate to its large and increasing expenditure." Thirty pounds was declared to be the maximum amount to be granted to any Circuit toward furnishing a house. It was ordered that in every Quarterly Meeting the salaries of the preachers' wives should be paid before any other demands were discharged. It was enjoined on the preachers, that after the Yearly Collection had been made in the Classes, its object and importance should be explained to the principal congregations, that those who felt disposed might send their donations to the superintendent. It was required, under penalty of censure, that every chairman of a District should, at each District Meeting, inquire into the financial state of the several Circuits in his District, particularly into the average amount of their weekly and quarterly contributions; that he might be able, when called upon, to report the same to the Conference.

It was also enacted, that before the deficiencies brought from any Circuit were paid at the District Meeting, inquiry should be made whether such Circuit had complied with the rule respecting the weekly and quarterly contributions in the Classes. And wherever this rule had not been complied with, it was directed, that the payment of the deficiencies should be deferred, and the case be reported to the Conference for decision.

The pecuniary difficulty resulting to Circuits from the great inequality of preachers' families, led to the adoption of the following minute:—"It is agreed that the District Meetings shall make inquiry into the number in Society, and the circumstances of the respective Circuits in their Districts; and shall draw up a plan to be presented to the next Conference, stating how many children ought in equity to be provided for by each Circuit." This information was asked for, as the means of supplying the Con-

ference with materials for drawing up a general plan for apportioning the cost of the children in an equitable manner among the Circuits.

The rule respecting the division of Circuits having been so construed, as to prevent even minor alterations in their boundaries; it was expressly declared, that "the boundaries of Circuits may be regulated, and partial alterations made, without dividing them or making any new Circuit; and such arrangements the District Meetings have authority to make, subject, however, to the decision of Conference, if there be any appeal against them." *

In the preceding year, the Irish Conference had laid down a rule, that if any Methodist preacher married a woman without the consent of her parent, he should be suspended or expelled. Or in the case of a woman under age, with no parent living, but having a guardian, the consent of such guardian was equally indispensable. These Minutes led the attention of the English Conference to this subject, which, after due consideration, affirmed:—That, in general, a woman ought not to marry without the consent of her parents; but that, under certain circumstances, a woman may not only be justified, but even *ought* to marry without such consent; but that, in such a case, a Methodist preacher ought not to be her husband.

The rule prohibiting improper persons from taking out licences to preach was re-enforced with increased stringency. The stated instruction of children and servants by catechizing, or other efficient means, as a regular religious duty, was strongly urged on the heads of families. The preachers were earnestly desired to attend to discipline, and to see that the sacred Scriptures were regularly read in all congregations assembling for worship "in what are called canonical hours."

* Minutes, vol. iii., p. 92.

Case of Mr. Orpe.

The ordinary operations of Methodism were marked by the usual features of alternating success and defection. Many were still "turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;" while others, who had tasted the good word of life, turned again to folly and sin. William Orpe was called into the ministry by Wesley in 1764. He laboured in the itinerancy three or four years with much acceptance, greatly beloved by the founder of Methodism, and respected by the people. He was, however, induced in 1768 to depart from the work, and reside on his father's farm, where he married. By this means, he avoided a course of severe labour and painful trial, and returned to a life of comparative ease and competence; but he did not secure happiness. He had the harrowing conviction that he had "departed from a work in which God had employed him." He gradually neglected spiritual duties, lost his religion, and remained carnal and worldly for thirty years. Under the ministry of Jonathan Edmondson he was again awakened to a sense of danger, sought the Lord "with weeping and with supplication," and was restored to the Divine favour. He began to call sinners to repentance, laboured usefully as a local preacher for ten years, and died in peace with God, in June, 1810.

Progress Methodism

Methodism advanced, not by mighty causes arrayed in pomp, and exhibiting an appearance of great power; but by the godly efforts of individuals, whose fidelity and zeal diffused the blessings of salvation. On some occasions, indeed, causes apparently too insignificant for public notice were rendered the means of salvation to many. The godly widow of a local preacher, left with a family of nine children, in consequence of her altered circumstances, removed from Fraisthorpe, where she previously resided, to a farm at Gransmoor, near Bridlington. Here she sought to pro-

cure those religious privileges which she had enjoyed, and which she now so especially needed. She succeeded in introducing Methodist preaching into the place. The Lord blessed His word; a Class was soon formed, and among others, a respectable farmer and his wife were brought to a knowledge of the truth. These, in a short time, removed to Barmiston. They found that village destitute of means of grace; and soon obtained a place for preaching, and the services of a minister. There, also, the word was crowned with success; a Class was formed, and many were brought to experience salvation. Thus, in the absence of any apparently potent instrumentality, the work of God silently, unobtrusively, and almost imperceptibly, won its way, and exerted its saving influence over the souls of men.

Under the pressing necessity created by a series of similar successes, the people of Chelsea were encouraged, and almost compelled, to enlarge their borders, by erecting, with promptitude and energy, the present commodious chapel in Sloane Terrace.

Remarkable answer to prayer in the case of Mr. Bramwell.

We have made frequent mention of the eminent piety, great zeal, and success of William Bramwell. But, no notice has been taken of many remarkable, almost miraculous, answers to prayer, which he so frequently realized. "One, which seems well attested, refers to sergeant-major Thomas Riley, of the Dragoon Guards,—a man well known and highly esteemed amongst the Societies for his services in the pulpit. In the character of a spiritual warrior, he was accustomed to preach occasionally, and with such effect that the chapels were always thronged. The spectacle itself must have been extremely curious; for it was his practice to officiate in uniform; and being a man of lofty stature and herculean strength, his appearance in the pulpit, where so few of his profession have ever been

seen, was productive of no slight interest. In his capacity of temporal warrior, however, he was ordered to proceed to Spain with his regiment, then stationed at Sheffield. The soldier was troubled at the idea of a speedy, and perhaps final, separation from his wife and four children; and the good woman, on her part, was overwhelmed with grief at her approaching bereavement. Mr. Bramwell, who knew him well, and who offered his ready sympathies in the hour of distress, thought it possible that the orders of government might be neutralized by the interposition of God. To assist Riley, he applied to Heaven, instead of the Horse Guards. After many applications from day to day, he met the soldier and his wife at the house of a friend. It was the last night of Riley's stay; the next morning his regiment was to march, and the next month his corpse might probably be stretched on some of the bloody battle-fields of the Peninsula. Mr. Bramwell sat abstractedly for a while, struggling apparently with some inward perplexity. He could obtain no satisfactory answer to his entreaties. 'But after supper was over,' says the gallant soldier, 'he suddenly pulled his hand out of his bosom, laid it on my knee, looked me in the face, and said, "Brother Riley, mark what I am about to say: You are *not* to go to Spain!" "But the marching orders?" "Never mind: remember, I tell you, you are not; for I have been wrestling with God on your behalf, and when my Heavenly Father condescends in mercy to bless me with power to lay hold on Himself, I do not easily let Him go; no, not until I am favoured with an answer. Therefore, depend upon it, that the next time I hear from you, you will be settled in quarters."' The next morning, however, Riley's regiment left Sheffield, with Spain for its prescribed destination; but he had not proceeded far before he learned that the order

had been countermanded; it was *not* to go to Spain! The next time Mr. Bramwell heard from the soldier, it was to say, that the latter was settled in quarters on English ground, as predicted." *

Continued literary opposition to Methodism.

Whilst Methodism was labouring for the conversion of the depraved, and the instruction of the ignorant, it was perseveringly followed by the most violent opposition, similar to the literary attacks previously alluded to. The Archdeacon of Sarum, in a visitation charge, laments the prevalence of Dissent, and attributes it, in part, to the indifference to the duties of their high office which he ascribes to the clergy; and partly to the conduct of sectarian preachers. The "itinerant enthusiast," says he, with his "eccentricities and irregularities," goes on "with his work of conversion with zeal and perseverance." Whatever the intention of the writer, such language was much more likely to bring the efficient proclamation of the Gospel into contempt, than to rouse the clergy of the Establishment to an adequate sense of their responsibility, or a zealous discharge of their duties.

The Rev. Josiah Thomas, rector of Street-cum-Walton, Somerset, pursued a similar course in his "Strictures on Subjects chiefly relating to the Established Religion," &c. After marvellous professions of candour and good-will, that "he would much rather his book should be universally reprobated and cried down, than any truly good man, of any sect or party, should, by his means, suffer in person, in property, in character, or in mind," he asserts, "We know that a man not unfrequently, by going thither," the meeting-house, "if he do by chance forego the vices of men, adopts those of devils;"—with much more of a similar kind.

* "Life and Ministry of the Rev. William Bramwell," p. 88.

But not only did pamphlets of rectors, and visitation charges of archdeacons, assail Methodism. The highest dignitaries of the Church, and the proudest literary oracles of the land, united in this persecution. William Magee, D.D., of the University of Dublin, and afterward archbishop of that diocese, published an important work on "the scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice." It might be supposed, that a learned work on these important subjects would be produced without any misrepresentation, or hostility toward any communion of evangelical Christians. We cannot believe that Dr. Magee would deliberately and intentionally misrepresent the doctrines or opinions of any one: but he certainly committed, in effect, an evil of equal magnitude, when he poured undeserved censure on a people, of whose religious principles and opinions he had no accurate knowledge. He united Wesley with Priestley, as denying that all men participate in the "universal taint" of human depravity. The bishop's own work is not a more complete defence of atonement and sacrifice, than Wesley's reply to Taylor is a logical proof of the scriptural doctrine of original sin. His representation that Wesley was indifferent to the religious opinions of his followers is equally unfounded. The learned Doctor dilates on this subject at length, dismissing it with the exclamation, "This, it must be admitted, is an excellent expedient for adding to the numbers of the sect."

It is not necessary at greater length to exhibit or refute the allegations which this learned divine so unjustly prefers against Wesley and Methodism. Their violence is their sufficient antidote. But what was the object for which all this extraneous matter was imported into a treatise on "atonement and sacrifice?" Nothing could be more alien to the learned author's subject than any reference to

Methodism. What had it, or Wesley, to do with his thesis? He takes care to indicate his design with sufficient distinctness. Dr. Magee well knew, that many spiritually minded ministers and laymen in the Established Church deeply sympathized with Wesley in his evangelical labours and successes, and rejoiced in the progress of Methodism after his decease. Anxious to mark their conduct with the brand of reprobation, he says, "It is much to be lamented, that any of the friends of true religion have given countenance to such a perversion of its soundest principles. Examples have not been wanting of cases in which the clergy have been set aside in the work of religious instruction; whilst men who uphold the Wesleyan chimera of perfection, who openly reject the Liturgy and Articles, and oppose the doctrines of the Established Church, have been deemed fit objects of preference to the recognised religious teachers of the land."* But, while countenance of Methodist doctrine and teachers was deplored, and the termination of this form of Christianity earnestly desired, more stringent and effective means of checking what was regarded as the prevailing evil were desiderated. Hence the learned doctor adds:—"It is equally matter of wonder and concern, that a system which no longer covertly, but openly and avowedly, works in continued hostility to the established religion, has not met with more effectual resistance from those who may be supposed to take an interest in the well-being of the Establishment."† This was the grand requisite. Methodism was to be resisted. The peril of the Establishment required it. Those who were supposed to take an interest in the well-being of the national Church were looked upon as bound to interpose coercive measures. It was, indeed,

* "Atonement and Sacrifice," vol. i., p. 162. Fourth Edition. 1816.

† *Ibid.*, p. 160.

"equally matter of wonder and concern" that this had not been more promptly and efficiently done.

The London Conference of 1810, consisting of about two hundred and fifty ministers, assembled on the thirtieth of July. Joseph Benson obtained his second election to the presidency, and Dr. Coke was again chosen secretary. Eager crowds attended the public services, and the parent sanctuary in City Road was often filled to overflowing. No previous Conference had witnessed more general peace and deep brotherly love. The preachers were strengthened and encouraged by their mutual intercourse. The result of the examination into the spiritual condition of the Connexion was "peculiarly pleasing," and the increase was again counted by thousands. Four ministers departed from the work "to serve tables," and two retired for want of health. Forty-seven candidates, among whom are the names of Barnabas Shaw, the apostle of the Namacquas, and William Reilly, the friend, companion, and biographer of the heroic Ouseley, were admitted on trial. The Conference of 1810.

The judicious and zealous measures adopted in respect of the Home Missions, favoured as these were with the Divine blessing, in common with the work generally, had led to such an extensive increase of Methodist ministrations, as called for a large addition to the number of Circuits. The list published in the Minutes of this year shows an aggregate of two hundred and eighty in Great Britain and Ireland, being twenty-three more than in the preceding year.*

* Higham Ferrers, Crickhowel, Caerfryddyn, Church Town, Pettigo, and Rathmelton ceased to be Circuits; and the following places became Circuits, viz., Leigh (Essex), Bletchingly and Farnham Mission, Hertfordshire Mission, Chichester, Towcester, Whitchurch, Wellingborough, Hungerford,

The number of members in Great Britain and Ireland was one hundred and sixty-six thousand and six, an increase of seven thousand nine hundred and eighty-five over last year; and the Societies in British America and the West Indies now had thirteen thousand five hundred and eighty, being a small decrease on the year.

Transactions of the Conference.

Gibraltar was placed on the same footing as one of the Home Circuits, with respect to appointments, removals, and a constant succession of preachers. The Missionary Committee were accordingly empowered to apply to any of the regular married preachers at home to succeed William Griffith, now stationed there, at the ensuing Conference. When they obtained the consent of any such preacher, they were to make the necessary arrangements for effecting the change. A grant of five hundred pounds was made from the Mission Funds to aid the noble and generous efforts of the Society and friends in erecting a chapel.

For facilitating the business of Conference, the Stationing Committee was directed to meet in future a week before the Conference, that the plan of the Stations might be prepared before the sittings began. Useful regulations were made respecting the audit of accounts, and the work of committees, intended to insure the preparation of the several reports for the opening of the annual assembly. The vigilant attention of chairmen of Districts was directed to all the particulars relating to candidates for the ministry, in order that they might be prepared with the most complete information respecting each person.

Torquay, Cirencester Mission, Newport, Brecon (Welsh), Merthyr Tydvil (Welsh Mission), Carmarthen (Welsh), Cardigan, Pwllheli, Evesham, Isle of Wight, Ormskirk, Burnley, Grassington Mission, Holmfirth, Ulverstone, Arbroath, Strannorlan, Newtownlimavady, and Armagh.

It was found that the discipline of the Connexion had in some respects been neglected in certain localities. Tickets had been given to persons who had ceased to meet in Class, and leaders had taken upon themselves to give notes of admission. Superintendents were directed to put an end to these irregularities.

The "king of terrors" had again been busy, and no less than thirteen fell beneath his stroke. Among the departed ones were some old and faithful, as well as able and well-known ministers.

JOHN MASON, who died in his seventy-eighth year, was engaged in the full work of the ministry thirty-three years. In 1797 he became a supernumerary, and preached as his failing strength and infirmities permitted. He had cultivated an acquaintance with an important circle of science, was well read in general and ecclesiastical history, and was an earnest student of natural history, particularly botany, of which his knowledge was profound and extensive. He had also studied anatomy and medicine. All these acquirements were made subservient to the illustration of theological truth. "Nor could it ever be said," observes Dr. Adam Clarke, "that he neglected his duty as a Christian minister to cultivate his mind in philosophical pursuits. He was a Christian man; and in life and spirit adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour. The decency, propriety, and dignity of his conduct, through the whole course of his life, were exemplary. And his piety toward God, and his benevolence toward man, were as deep as they were sincere."

JOHN ALLEN, born at Chapel-en-le-Frith, June, 1737, was the son of honest and industrious parents in humble circumstances. His father a Churchman and his mother a Presbyterian, he went to church with the one, or to "meeting" with the other; but sometimes his mother took him

"to hear the Methodists." He was "preserved from swearing, drunkenness, and other scandalous sins;" but "dancing, singing, cards, and merry-making" wielded over him a resistless witchery. His eye once fell upon the solemn passage, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Quick as lightning, he concluded that *his* day of grace was past. The death of his mother, heavy affliction among his relatives, and one or two sermons from John Oliver brought him to religious decision. The woods and fields were frequented for prayer; and one day, while wrestling with God in secret, his heart rested on the Saviour's atonement; the burden fell from his soul; and, leaping up for very joy, he sang, out of the fulness of a new-born heart,

"For sinners like me,
He bled on the tree;
O, who would not love such a Saviour as Thee?"

After "exhorting and preaching four years," he was received into the Methodist ministry in 1766, and appointed to Manchester. London, Leeds, Keighley, Bristol, and other places were the after-scenes of his conscientious and useful efforts. In 1799, his terrible "asthma compelled him to write, "I am an old man, worn out with travelling and labouring for thirty-three years. None can tell what I felt, when I had to walk, and could hardly get up the pulpit stairs, and was obliged to hold by the pulpit to keep myself from falling." In February, 1810, at the "good old age" of seventy-three, he was dismissed, and rewarded. "Have you a strong confidence in God?" inquired a friend, just as his "soul was in departing." "Yes!" was his instant, but whispered reply. As a Christian, he was a steady, upright, and humble follower of the Lord Jesus. As a preacher, he was sound in doctrine, apt, as well as able,

to teach; exemplary in his life; prudent, as well as faithful, in the enforcement of discipline; an unassuming superintendent; a peaceable and affectionate helper: in short, "he had all the characteristic marks of a man of God."

In the death of ROBERT LOMAS, in the prime of manhood, the Conference "lost one of its most worthy members." Monyash, in the Peak of Derbyshire, a village whose name is immortalized in Methodism as the early residence of Jabez Bunting's father and mother, was the place of his birth, in 1768. The son of Methodist parents, he had every religious advantage, and received an education above the average of those in similar circumstances. In 1782 he removed to London, and attended good old City Road. Though preserved from outward immorality, his seriousness declined, until "the Lord laid hold on him effectually, and wrought a wonderful change."

The record of his conversion is quite out of the common order. His sense of sin and of impending wrath destroyed his appetite, and wasted his strength. Brought to his "wits' end," he wrote a note to one of the preachers. The note was not delivered; no help came; and he concluded "all was over." He "sank into deep melancholy and sullen silence." Carried to bed, bled, and blistered for many weary weeks, he took no food but what was almost forced upon him. At length relief came. John Marsden, a native of Monyash, and an old friend of his father's, lived near; and his wife, hearing of Robert's affliction, hasted to see him. She well understood his case, and told him how to obtain mercy. He had heard it all often before; yet it seemed new to him, as "if he had been a wild Indian or a stupid Hottentot." He listened to his instructress with "surprise and suspense;" and said

within himself, "This is the word of God! This is the truth! I must either believe or perish. If I *do* believe, I may *not* perish." The Lord's blessed words shot through his mind, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He cried out, "Lord, I do believe!" He had a clear and strong evidence that all his sins were blotted out. The good Physician had done His part, and the happy patient rose from his bed the same day, free from pain, lively and vigorous, eating his food with gladness, and drinking his wine with a merry heart. Days of solemn ecstasy followed, in which his "sentiments and feelings were too big to be expressed."

Returning to his friends in Manchester, he soon became actively employed as a prayer-leader and exhorter. About Christmas, 1786, he preached his first sermon, from Revelation iii. 20, and entered the ministry in 1789. His diary discloses the man of God,—cautious, scrupulous, somewhat severe upon himself; devout, humble, and tender-hearted; anxious above all things to approve himself to the great Master. As a minister, he was "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed," feeding the flock "with knowledge and understanding," and watching over them with the care and tenderness of a true shepherd. His singular abilities as an arithmetician and man of business led to his appointment as book-steward; but having set matters in perfect order, and longing to be wholly given up to the ministry, he retired, after four years' service, with the warmest thanks of the Conference. He went to Bristol, and entered upon the Circuit with every promise of extensive usefulness; but alas! after fifteen months' cheerful labour, a malignant brain fever laid him aside. While delirium raged, and it was difficult for four men to restrain him, all his conversation

was "according to godliness." When reason again asserted her sway, his first words were, "Lord, what is man?" There was a partial rally, and a few more opportunities of usefulness; but nature had been too deeply worsted in the struggle, and his end drew near. "Are you happy?" said a friend. "Yes, very happy." "Is Jesus precious to you?" "O yes! O yes! Jesus is mine. My crown is waiting for me, is coming to me. I am going to receive my crown." "He then turned on his side, drew up his feet, and expired without a groan."

Our space will allow us to do little more than mention the other ten who passed away during the year. They are JOHN LEECH, a plain and perspicuous preacher, dwelling much on the essentials of religion; an old man, full of "simplicity and godly sincerity:"—WILLIAM M'ALLUM, a "lover of souls," and a faithful and zealous preacher of the "unsearchable riches of Christ:"—RICHARD ARTER, only twenty-four years old, and after three months' labour, retired to die:—THOMAS WARWICK, who entered the ministry in 1778, passed away, "lifting up his hands," and shouting, "I am going to glory!"—WILLIAM COX, whose "doctrine distilled as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, as the showers upon the grass;" and whose last words were, "My hope is the hope of ages; a hope of immortality; a hope of eternal life:"—JAMES PARKINSON, a young man of respectable talents, who finished his earthly course with, "I am going to see my Saviour: I see the heavens open:"—WILLIAM SANDERSON, one of the early Methodist converts at Bristol, whose mother resided for several years with the amiable and learned Dr. Doddridge: his dying testimony was, "I have endeavoured for more than thirty years to keep the hour of death in view, that it might be as easy for me to die, as to go out of one room

into another; and, blessed be God, I find it as easy now as to go out of this sitting-room into that bed-room:"—Abraham Haigh, awakened under Matthew Lumb's farewell sermon before leaving for the West Indies, and who finished a short ministry of seven years by a peaceful end:—John Sandoe, a native of Cornwall, and a minister of twenty-three years' standing:—and Thomas Biggins, another victim to "damp beds,"* under whose first sermon two persons were converted; a young man of much promise, who had only travelled four years.

These many deaths of their fellow-labourers so deeply affected the Conference, that, just before they dispersed for another year's toil, they sang the following stanzas "with many tears:"—

"Jesus, accept the praise
That to Thy name belongs!
Matter of all our lays,
Subject of all our songs;
Through Thee we now together came,
And part exulting in Thy name.

"In flesh we part awhile,
But still in spirit join'd,
To' embrace the happy toil,
Thou hast to each assign'd:
And while we do Thy blessed will,
We bear our heaven about us still

"O let us thus go on
In all Thy pleasant ways;
And, arm'd with patience, run
With joy the' appointed race!
Keep us and every seeking soul,
Till all attain the heavenly goal.

* These "damp beds" now attracted the attention of the Conference, and the following much needed note is inserted at the end of the year's Obituaries:—"It is much to be desired, that all our friends would take due care to have the beds in which they put the preachers perfectly dry."

"There shall we meet again,
When all our toils are o'er,
And death, and grief, and pain,
And parting are no more;
We shall with all our brethren rise,
And grasp Thee in the flaming skies."

The "Quarterly Review" on Methodism.

The efforts to write down Methodism, or, at least, to prepare the public mind for some means of coercing it, were continued this year with augmented virulence. The "Quarterly Review," which aspired to be the highest literary authority of the land, joined in these unchristian denunciations. This periodical was projected before the close of 1808, and the first number was published in February, 1809. It professed full allegiance to "Church and State," and avowed uncompromising hostility to all opponents of the monarchy and the Establishment. With such a purpose, and without any clear recognition of spiritual religion, whilst it aimed at directing the moral and political opinions of the country, and indicating the course of its legislation, it cannot be matter of surprise that it should cast an evil eye upon Methodism. It had previously contained various indirect allusions, but now it put forth all its strength. The attack was not directed against Methodism by name. The article, attributed to the pen of Robert Southey, was, "On the Evangelical Sects," and professedly a review of "Hints to the Public and the Legislature, on the Nature and Effects of Evangelical Preaching. By a Barrister." From no desire to meddle with literary filth and moral abomination do we refer to these matters; but in order to show to the present generation the extent to which Methodism was then regarded as the parent and most influential promoter of evangelical doctrines, and to exhibit the manner in which these doctrines and their upholders were treated fifty years ago.

A barrister's pamphlet on evangelical preaching

The chief object of the barrister was to show, "that the public depravity" (of which he gives a frightful numerical account from Mr. Colquhoun's "Treatise") "is, in great measure, owing to the doctrines of the evangelical preachers." "They tell the people," he says, "that they may multiply their offences to any degree they please; that the seducer, the gambler, the drunkard, the prostitute, the sharper, the robber, may all proceed in their career of infamy; that their lives cannot be too impure, or their offences too aggravated; for that, when once the weapon of sin shall fall from their hands, they will not be precluded by this their long catalogue of crimes from the offered reward of the Gospel; for that the Gospel does not suspend its favour on the performance of any moral duties whatever.....The word of proclamation delivered weekly from the pulpit, and dispersed daily in cheap tracts to all degrees of society, is, to the seducer: 'You have betrayed many that once were innocent, and brought down many a father's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave; but add one more victim; *for your life cannot be too impure;* and then *take refuge in a Redeemer.*' To the robber: 'You have corrupted many an honest mind by your example, and ruined many an honest man by your villany; but your crimes cannot be too many, or too aggravated: commit one more fraud on the public, and then lay hold on the cross.' To the murderer: 'Your sins cannot be too great; dip your hands once more in the blood of your fellow-creatures, and then wash them white in the blood of the Lamb.' Such is the plain, distinct, intelligible language of evangelical teaching."

The reviewer's reply.

To this "wilful and malicious misstatement," as the reviewer very properly calls it, he makes a tolerably satisfactory reply; but, having rendered this tribute to truth

and honesty, and "fully and fairly admitted that Methodism produces great good," he proceeds to "show that it produces great evil also." This reviewer is far from writing with the ignorance which the censors of Methodism then usually displayed. He had carefully inquired into the subject, and made himself tolerably acquainted with the discipline, doctrines, and general economy of the Connexion. Yet, the article is a flagrant misrepresentation of Methodism, and a false and foul libel on its character and object. This was, perhaps, occasioned by two concurring causes.

In the first place the reviewer was unquestionably destitute of proper moral qualifications for his task. He professed to exhibit and characterize the constitution and operations of a religious community, which arose out of a burning zeal inspired by a deep experience of personal religion. And yet every page clearly proves that, whatever else the writer might know, he was totally ignorant of the religion of the heart. Set a man whose ear never enabled him to learn a tune, to criticize music; or a person utterly devoid of taste, to point out the beauties and defects of a gallery of paintings; and you obtain results sufficiently ridiculous and absurd. But these will not be comparable to the absurdity which issues from the attempt of any man destitute of Divine illumination, to understand, explain, and judge the requirements, nature, and fruits of real religion. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) Hence, when this writer, able as he is, discusses the Bands and Class Meetings, lovefeasts and watchnights, preachers and people, of Methodism, without recognising a work of grace in the soul, his opinions and conclusions are alike ridiculous and worthless.

The reviewer's misrepresentations and perversions.

But the concluding part of this review sufficiently shows that the writer was not deeply concerned to elicit the truth respecting the subject under discussion. He wrote not to hold up Methodism to ridicule and contempt, although he could not altogether keep out of this beaten track, but to show that Methodism was opposed to the the Church, and inimical to the State; that its rapid progress was pregnant with serious danger to both.

For this purpose the doctrines and preaching of the Methodists were misrepresented, and then styled a "pitiable delusion, perilous in its consequences." Their union, organization, and isolation from other parts of the community are said to be carried to such an extent, that "in proportion as they overspread the country, the very character of the English face is altered; for Methodism transforms the countenance as certainly as sottishness or opium;" that "they have already obtained as distinct a physiognomy as the Jews, or the Gypsies; coarse, hard, and dismal visages, as if some spirit of darkness had got into them, and was looking out of them." "The Methodists already form a distinct people in the state, and the main object of their rulers is to keep up and strengthen the distinction."

These assertions being sustained by the most plausible perversions of Methodist institutions and teaching which the reviewer could command, he proceeds to point out some of the serious evils which are produced. We are told, that "no works in this country are so widely circulated, and studied by so many thousand readers, as the Evangelical and Methodist Magazines; and that the bigotry, fanaticism, and uncharitableness of these publications are melancholy proofs of human weakness." "Of these publications" the reviewer has no hesitation in saying, "that they produce evil, great evil, nothing but evil; that they tend to

narrow the judgment, debase the intellect, and harden the heart." "What then," it is asked, "must be the effect of a confederated and indefatigable priesthood, who barely tolerate literature, and actually hate it, upon all those classes over whom literature has any influence?" "To those classes," it is replied, "Methodism is not less injurious than it is beneficial to the rude and uncivilized orders; it acts upon them as a mildewing superstition, blasting all genius in the bud, and withering every flower of loveliness and of innocent enjoyment."

But it was not enough to state that Methodism was so bad, and calculated to produce so much fatal injury to the upper classes of society. The purpose of the writer made it necessary to show that there was in Methodism a disposition, a design, and would soon probably be a power, to accomplish all this. He accordingly says, "That men of these feelings, this temper, and these principles, would persecute, if they had the power, no reasonable man can doubt." And this, he unblushingly declares, was contemplated by Wesley, and continued to be aimed at by his followers: "It is, indeed, apparent that, with whatever feelings Wesley began his career, it soon became the scope of his ambition to lay the foundations of a church which should rival, and finally supersede, the Establishment." It is, indeed, admitted, that "there are many, very many, good and pious members of the sect, who dream of no such consequence;" but it is insisted, "That the governing heads are driving to this goal, seems unquestionable." And the reviewer would really have it believed that the Methodists, who had but yesterday been despised, persecuted, and trodden under foot, might soon have sufficient numbers and power to consummate their plans and purposes, by a fatal aggression on the civilized classes

of society and the Established Church. To sustain this extravagant notion, he shows that the Connexion had increased from twenty-nine thousand four hundred and six members in 1770, to one hundred and nine thousand nine hundred and sixty-one in 1800, and was increasing at the rate of about seven thousand members *per annum*. He then asks, in deep concern, "How long will it be before this people begins to count hands with the Establishment?" "It is no light evil," he continues, "for a state to have within its bosom so numerous, and active, and increasing a party, whose whole system tends to cut them off from all common sympathy with their countrymen, and who are separatists, not in religious worship alone, but in all the ordinary observances of life." Lastly, it is insinuated, on the authority of some hand-bill, that the Methodists contemplated an alteration of the reigning dynasty!

We shall not attempt any formal reply to this long and malignant libel on an inoffensive religious community. Anything of that kind is altogether unnecessary. Most of its falsehood and misrepresentation are so transparent as to furnish their own confutation; while the unshaken loyalty of Methodism to the throne, and its sincere and friendly bearing toward the National Church during the half-century since elapsed, form an ample answer to the allegations of the reviewer. We have now to notice the determined attack on the institutions of Methodism, and the religious liberties of the country, to prepare the way for which this and many other articles of less importance were written and published.

This review appeared in the "Quarterly" of November, 1810. On the ninth of May, 1811, Lord Sidmouth rose, in the House of Lords, to move for leave to bring in a Bill, which he called, "An Act to explain and

render more effectual certain Acts of the First Year of King William and Queen Mary, and of the Nineteenth Year of the Reign of his present Majesty, so far as the same relate to Protestant Dissenting Ministers." The reasons alleged for the introduction of the Bill were, in themselves, quite sufficient to alarm all who felt concerned for the preservation of religious liberty. He stated that most of the Quarter Sessions had so construed the Toleration Act, as to feel bound to grant a licence to any applicant willing to take the oaths, and make the required declaration. This he deprecated as a great injury to religion. He contended that many, who had obtained licences, ought never to have been recognised as teachers of religion. He commended the decision of the Quarter Sessions of two counties, in refusing to grant any licence, except to a person in holy orders, or pretended holy orders, and who was the teacher or preacher of a congregation. The noble Lord closed his speech by alluding to the great increase in the number of Dissenting preachers during the few years preceding. After an earnest protest against the measure from Lord Holland, seconded by Lord Stanhope, leave was given to bring in the Bill.

Lord Sidmouth introduces his coercive Bill into the House of Lords.

Scarcely any single measure, in the history of our national legislation, produced more intense or general excitement among the Methodists and Dissenters, than this proposal. Two days after the announcement in the House of Peers, the Wesleyan Committee of Privileges met, and passed a series of eighteen spirited and sensible resolutions. It was shown that the effect of the Bill would be to abridge the privileges of the regular preachers, to render it very difficult, if not impracticable, to continue the religious services of local preachers and exhorters,—that it would greatly embarrass, and probably endanger the con-

Intense alarm produced in the country.

tinuance of, Class and prayer-meetings,—and that, in other respects, the proposed Bill appeared fraught with such damaging consequences as to render it, or even any amendment of it, intolerable. A Sub-Committee was appointed to carry these resolutions into effect, but it was determined to send a deputation to Lord Sidmouth, to request him to withdraw his Bill, before any positive action was taken.

The deputation, with Thomas Thompson, Esq., M.P., at its head, waited on his lordship, and were most politely and courteously received. The noble viscount assured them of his willingness to receive any information or representation respecting the proposed measure. He gave attention to all they had to say, and allowed the Methodists full credit for usefulness, zeal, and loyalty; but when urged to withdraw the Bill, he intimated that he felt it to be his duty to leave the decision of the subject to the House of Lords.

Extensive opposition offered to the measure.

Nothing now remained but to give the measure the most strenuous opposition. Copies of the resolutions were forwarded to every Circuit, and petitions, as numerously signed as the limited time would allow, were requested to be forwarded with the utmost celerity. Meanwhile, Lord Erskine was put in possession of the objections which the Methodist people felt to the measure, and the injury which they anticipated from its operation. He gave the fullest attention to the case, consented to present the Methodist petitions to the House, and promised to oppose the Bill. Earl Grey and Lord Holland expressed a similar purpose.

Lord Sidmouth had purposed proceeding with unreasonable haste in attempting to carry the measure. The Bill was presented on the eleventh of May, and the second reading fixed for the seventeenth. Lord Stanhope moved that the second reading should be deferred to some future

day. This motion was seconded by Earl Grey, and so far acceded to by Lord Sidmouth, that he fixed the twenty-first for the debate. Meanwhile, the whole Methodist community were in a state of great and anxious concern. Means of transit and intercommunication were not so rapid as now; but every exertion was made to render the petitions as weighty and numerous as possible.

Fearful consequences which its success would have inflicted on evangelical religion.

This being the first public measure which called forth our personal concern, we shall never forget the excitement. The fervent and persevering prayers offered up to God for His interposition and blessing on the earnest zeal and labouring diligence exercised on this cause, as they passed under our youthful eye, seem still present to the mind. Nor can we, even at this distant point of time, consider these prayers and efforts uncalled for. They now seem to have been justified and demanded beyond any thing then imagined. When we recall the life-long labours of Wesley; the self-sacrifice of his noble coadjutors; the expenditure of intellect, life, and money, throughout seventy years, to rear up the Methodist Connexion to what it was in 1810, and to make it a means for diffusing the Gospel throughout all ages; we cannot but feel persuaded that all this hope for the future was involved in the fate of the Bill which then lay on the table of the British House of Lords. Had that Bill passed through Parliament, and received the royal assent, Methodism, which had flourished amid brutal persecution, and increased in numbers and influence, when opposed by the pride of power, and the most bitter denunciations and invectives of the press, would have been crushed by an unjust and persecuting penal law. The proposed measure would have supplied all the means of coercion which the bigoted and persecuting amongst the magistracy could desire. It would have superseded the work of mobs by

closing the most numerous, and those the most neceother means of grace throughout the Methodist Connexion. It would have left nothing for semi-infidel pamphleteers, or rabid reviewers, to demand from the Government, for checking evangelical religion, and locking up the national mind, as far as could be done by statute law, in cold, formal, lifeless orthodoxy.

We have no desire to exaggerate the importance of this struggle; but have no doubt that to it, more than to any other public event which has transpired in this country since the expulsion of the Stuarts, we owe the religious liberty of Britain. If any person regard this judgment as extravagant, let him form his opinion, not from England as it is now, but as it was then. We now see the Church of England, throughout all the sections of her clergy, with few, very few exceptions indeed, instinct with energy and earnestness. But where, at that time, were earnestness and energy to be found in the Church, except with the clergy who were stigmatized as Methodists and Evangelicals? Bear in mind also that the opposition which a continued series of literary efforts provided to prepare the way for this measure, was not so much directed against the Methodists as a sect, as against evangelical religion. The article, so recently and largely referred to, from the "Quarterly Review," is "On the Evangelical Sects." That previously referred to from the "Edinburgh" plainly included the evangelical clergy in the same condemnation as the Methodists. Yet who can doubt that it is to the aggregate exertions of these, in that Church and out of it, that we are, under God, indebted for the marvellous religious progress in this country during the past fifty years? Whence emanated that earnest manner of preaching, which places this country in such striking contrast with the past?

Whence that anxiety to render preaching effectual by producing gracious results in the hearers? What has multiplied our Missions at home and abroad, and scattered Bibles broad-cast over this country and the world? It is patent and undeniable, that this great religious progress is mainly traceable to that portion of the religious community which these literary efforts were meant to write down, and which it was the object of this Bill to crush or destroy.

How could the evangelical ministers then in the Church, few in numbers and feeble in power as they were, have borne up under the discouraging influence of an Act of Parliament, which, having crushed all who sympathized with them beyond the pale of the Establishment, must afterward have fearfully reacted on themselves? How could religion be maintained and extended amongst Dissenters or Methodists, if a pious peasant could not pray with his neighbours, nor a godly artisan give religious advice to a circle of friends, without having their qualifications scanned and judged by a magistrate, who perhaps knew no more of spiritual religion than of Sanscrit? If all these, and other very obvious considerations, are fairly weighed, it will be seen that the baneful import of Lord Sidmouth's Bill can scarcely be over-rated.

The threatened evil fully seen at the time.

Happily for the best interests of the country, the good men of that day did not leave us to learn by bitter experience the extent of the interests imperilled. They exerted themselves nobly; and when the appointed twenty-first of May arrived, they were prepared. The Methodist Committee not only circulated their resolutions in the Societies, but sent a copy to every member of the House of Peers whose address could be procured. The judgment of the country was to be made known to their Lordships'

House by petitions, such as could be obtained in only a very short time; yet the efforts put forth produced a singular, and at that time perhaps unprecedented, result. Lord Stanhope presented a petition signed by more than two thousand persons, and said, if the Bill was persisted in, the petitioners, instead of thousands, would have to be counted by millions. Lord Holland and Lord Lauderdale presented many petitions. Earl Grey presented seventy-eight; the Earl of Rosslyn, twenty-five; Lord Erskine, two hundred and fifty-five; Lord Lansdowne, above one hundred. The whole number was six hundred and twenty-nine.

The opposition successful, and the Bill rejected.

Lord Sidmouth, in a mild and conciliatory speech, moved the second reading of the Bill. He was immediately followed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who declared his utter abhorrence of religious persecution. He lamented the errors, as he thought them, of Dissenters; but admitted they had a full right to the possession of their religious opinions. He maintained that religious coercion was not only absurd and impolitic, but for all good purposes impracticable. He should have thought the Bill, both as explaining the Toleration Act, and as adapted to make Dissenting ministers more respectable, laudable; but the Dissenters were the best judges, and as they were opposed to it, he thought it unwise and impolitic to press the Bill against their consent. Lord Erskine, in an eloquent speech, moved as an amendment, that the Bill be read that day six months. He was followed by Lords Holland, Stanhope, and Grey; so that with a single apologetic remark from the Lord Chancellor, and a short reply from Lord Sidmouth, the amendment was carried without a divison. The Bill was consequently lost, and the attempt to abridge the religious liberties of Englishmen utterly defeated.

The danger that threatened all the Non-conforming denominations from the introduction of Lord Sidmouth's Bill, led to an acquaintance between Jabez Bunting and Richard Watson. They were both resident in Manchester, the former as a Wesleyan, the latter as a New Connexion, minister. One Sunday, after the intention of Lord Sidmouth had been announced, both these ministers were preaching at Stockport, and casually met as they were returning to Manchester in the evening. The projected measure naturally became the subject of conversation. They agreed that if this Bill passed it would be ruinous to Methodism, and very damaging to the Dissenting interest generally. They therefore agreed, that means should be taken to make the country aware of the dangerous character of the proposed enactment. At Bunting's request, Watson wrote a long, able, and earnest letter, which was published in the "Manchester Exchange Herald." This conversation between these great men led to a pure and lasting friendship, productive of much advantage to religion generally, particularly to the cause of Missions, and which was only terminated by death.

First intimacy between Mr. Bunting and Mr. Watson.

During this year the Kirkgate chapel, Bradford, Yorkshire, a noble and commanding structure, was built, and opened on Sunday, May eleventh, 1811, by Charles Atmore and Robert Newton. Connected with the chapel were two commodious preachers' residences, with a spacious vestry, class-rooms, and a large burial-ground attached.

Dr. Coke having declined, Dr. Clarke was appointed to preside over the ensuing Conference in Ireland. Although this eminent minister was very desirous of revisiting his native country, a little unpleasantness arose, which very nearly prevented his fulfilling this appointment. From the frequent visits and exertions of Coke on behalf of Irish

Dr Adam Clarke visits Ireland.

Methodism, its ministers and Societies had been led to regard him with very great affection and respect; and his Commentary had been very extensively read and approved by them. When, therefore, the first portion of Clarke's Bible made its appearance, and it was seen that he had spoken of Coke's work as a mere reprint of Dr. Dodd's, and that Coke was referred to with, at least, implied censure for not acknowledging whence he had derived his materials, they thought Dr. Clarke had treated their friend too harshly; and expressed themselves in strong terms on the subject, both in speaking and writing. Clarke replied to a gentleman who had written to him, explaining the reasons which induced him to pen his notice of Dr. Coke's Bible, and intimating his intention of relinquishing all idea of his proposed visit. Happily his objections were overruled. Accompanied by his brother-in-law, Mr. Butterworth, and his eldest son, he left England toward the end of May, and reached Dublin on the thirty-first.

Preaches in different parts of the country.

Clarke availed himself of this opportunity to examine some ancient biblical MSS. in the library of Trinity College, and to prosecute some researches in connexion with the objects of the Record Commission. Sunday, June second, he preached twice to large congregations; including several clergymen and collegians. The following Tuesday the party left Dublin for a tour through the northern parts of the island, visiting every object of interest, and especially the scenes of Clarke's early life, and the locality of his conversion. In the course of this journey, the doctor preached at Dundalk, Charlemount, Dungannon, Cookstown, Ballymena, Lisburn, Lurgan, Portadown, Newry, and Dungarvan. In some of these places the congregations were crowded into the Methodist chapels; at others, larger buildings belonging to the Presbyterians were placed at his

disposal. At Ballymena, by the invitation of the rector, he preached in the church; and where suitable buildings could not be obtained, the multitude assembled in some convenient field, and listened to the word of life. In closing the account of his journey, the Doctor says:—"I have ended my preaching pilgrimage, in which I have spent one whole month, and during that time I have travelled almost incessantly, proclaiming salvation to many thousands; and, during the last eight days, preached five times in the open air. Our Conference begins to-morrow."

And presides at the Irish Conference.

Clarke was of course president of this Irish Conference, and Matthew Lanktree secretary. In addition to the routine business, leave was given for building ten chapels; but it was resolved that the erection of no chapel should in future be allowed, "until one half of the expense be first obtained." Several resolutions were passed for improving the finances of the Societies, urging the people to comply with existing and long established rules. Measures were also devised for securing increased caution in recommending candidates for the ministry; and for reviving quarterly fasts, quarterly watch-nights, and street and field preaching, wherever it might be practicable.

Important measures adopted.

The visit of Clarke was pre-eminently beneficial in relieving the urgent distresses of the Irish preachers. The sufferings they had endured from the insufficient provision for their wants and unhealthy lodgings, were providentially made known, and excited the sympathy of Butterworth, as well as of the Doctor. A meeting of the principal friends of the Society in Dublin, with many from the country, was held. The modesty of the preachers, who had suffered so long in silence, was greatly admired. A subscription was immediately opened to relieve them; it

was determined to draw up and circulate a plain statement of the facts of the case; and the friends throughout the country were invited to co-operate with those in Dublin. The result was, that measures for ameliorating the condition of the Irish preachers were prosecuted with considerable zeal.

Continued persecution in the West Indies.

The continued decrease in the West India Mission arose from the inveterate persecution to which the missionaries were exposed, notwithstanding the interference of the home government on their behalf. When his Majesty in Council disallowed the persecuting statute of Jamaica, the information was accompanied by the draught of a Bill, which the governor-general was desired to "take an early opportunity of proposing to the Assembly, to be passed into law." But the Assembly immediately passed a resolution declaring, that "any attempt from the Board of Lords of Trade and Plantations to his Majesty, or any other, to direct or influence the proceedings of this House, in matters of internal regulation, by any previous proposition or decision on what is referred to, or under their consideration and deliberation, is an interference with the appropriate functions of the House, which it is their bounden duty never to submit to." The persecuting statute, however, being repealed, the missionaries returned to the work. They were frequently impeded by local edicts, and the people often cruelly punished for worshipping God; but indications of prosperity were beginning to appear, when a new ordinance, again silencing the preachers, and closing the chapels, was published in June, 1807.

The Committees in England renewed their exertions, and, after considerable difficulty and delay, this enactment shared the fate of its predecessors, and was repealed by the King in Council on May twenty-third, 1809. In communicating this

fact to the government of Jamaica, his Majesty commanded the legislature there "to make no more laws relating to religion, without first laying a copy of them before himself in Council." Yet, notwithstanding this peremptory mandate, the Jamaica government still found frequent means for silencing the preachers, and otherwise impeding the operations of the Mission.

The Conference of 1811.

The Sheffield Conference of 1811, beginning on the twenty-seventh of July, and numbering about two hundred and ninety ministers, was one of unusual satisfaction. There was a clear increase of more than seven thousand five hundred members. Many new congregations and societies had been formed during the year; several chapels had been erected, and others enlarged and beautified. Charles Atmore was elected president, and Dr. Coke again appointed secretary. Mr. Benson had arranged with several preachers for a series of consecutive discourses, chiefly on the leading doctrines of Christianity, to be preached in the Conference chapel during the week nights. The attendance was large; the discourses, several of which were afterward published in the Magazine, were very able, and attracted great attention.

The large increase in the Societies, and the creation of thirty-five new Circuits,* demanded a ministerial supply which could not be furnished in the ordinary way. The list

* Hertfordshire, Sussex, and Bideford Mission ceased to be Circuits; and Deptford, Brentford, Barnet, Chelmsford Mission, Ipswich, Ashford Mission, Framlingham, Farnham Mission, Reading, Marlborough Mission, Stratton Mission, Okehampton Mission, Barnstaple, Kingswood, Minehead, Melksham, Stanton, West Bromwich, Coleshill, Coventry, Ledbury Mission, Oswestry, Altringham, Ashton-under-Lyne, Bacup, Prescot, Garstang, Bramley, Pateley Bridge, Cromford, Worksop, Holderness, Guisborough, Thirsk, Wensley Dale, Brampton Mission, Greenock, and Innishowen, became Circuits.

of thirty-nine young men accepted from the various District Meetings, includes John Mason, who for more than thirty-five years has been "our Book Steward;" Joseph Fowler, who, after a most faithful ministry and being once Secretary of the Conference, departed in great peace; and Isaac Keeling, who has filled the presidential chair, and is still employed in Circuit life. Besides these, twenty-two were accepted on condition that they passed the next Quarterly Meeting and an examination by three Superintendents. The well-known names of John Scott and John P. Haswell, the only survivors, appear in this list.

There were only two retirements, both on account of health, from the ministry, and the following eight were dismissed to their reward:—GEORGE BALDWIN, who was converted in early life; entered the ministry in 1786, and died at the very hour the previous Conference commenced:—ROBERT SWAN, a native of Scotland, had travelled twenty-six years, and his ministry had been blessed to the salvation of many:—At the Christmas Quarterly Meeting in Leeds, PARSON GREENWOOD, an old and faithful preacher, rose up, and, leaning on the top of his staff, told his friends he believed that was the last meeting of the kind he should attend, and died a few weeks afterwards, in the eighty-third year of his age, and the forty-ninth of his ministry:—JOHN WATSON, "a man of sound sense and solid piety," fell a victim to "a damp bed:"—JOHN CHARRINGTON and JAMES ALEXANDER sank into an early grave in the Mission field:—BOOTH NEWTON departed just in manhood's prime:—and PIERRE DU PONTAVICE, the son of a French nobleman, ended his early chequered, but finally calm and happy, course. He had just left college when the French Revolution broke out, and joined the army under the Duke of Brunswick. After escaping many perils, he arrived in

Jersey, where, in spite of the Popish priests, he heard the Methodist preachers. Coming to London, Richard Reece introduced him to Dr. Coke, with whom Pontavice gladly accepted an engagement. He soon became deeply concerned about his soul, and obtained peace, while Henry Taylor and William Bramwell were praying with him in Sheffield. He entered the ministry in 1800, and preached with great acceptance in the Channel Islands and in France. He was very useful, especially among several Protestant congregations near Bolbec. He praised God night and day in his last affliction; and when the power of speech was gone, "with his face like that of an angel, he lifted his right hand, with his looks toward heaven, and then fell asleep in so sweet a manner, that his last breath could not be perceived."

Its transactions.

Collections were allowed to be made, within certain prescribed limits, for ninety-five needy chapel trusts. Minutes were adopted for inducing a more vigilant attention to family religion; for the establishment of Tract Societies in all the Circuits; for enforcing a more faithful attention to discipline by the superintendents; and for more zealously watching over the Class Leaders, with a view to promote their holiness and usefulness.

Dr. Coke was authorized to visit such of the Circuits as he thought proper, for soliciting private subscriptions on behalf of the Mission Fund. A special vote of thanks was passed to the Committee of Privileges for their well directed, indefatigable, and successful exertions in opposition to Lord Sidmouth's Bill. "The particular and unanimous thanks of the Conference were also given to Thomas Thompson, Esq., M.P., to William Marriott, Sen., Esq., and to Mr. Thomas Allan, for their most important and disinterested services on that momentous occasion."

Other minutes were passed respecting the audit of the general accounts; Kingswood School; the purchase and settlement of the estate at Woodhouse Grove; and for raising the requisite funds for that purpose.

Attempts to wrest existing laws for the persecution of Methodism.

The attempt to restrict Methodism by coercive laws had been defeated by the rejection of Lord Sidmouth's Bill; but the enemies of evangelical religion endeavoured to accomplish their purpose by reviving mob persecution, in the hope of harassing the Methodists with impunity; and by proceeding against them penally, in the expectation of succeeding by an illiberal construction of the Toleration Act. We give one instance of each of these efforts.

Sunday, January thirteenth, 1811, a Methodist congregation assembled in their licensed meeting-place at Pershore, Worcestershire. They had frequently been grievously ill-treated; but, on this occasion, the shutters and windows were broken, and stones were thrown into the place, by which one woman was wounded. They determined to seek the protection of the law. Mr. Hunt, a man of property, who was openly engaged in this outrage, was indicted. Proceedings having been commenced, the indictment was removed by *certiorari* from the Quarter Sessions to the Assizes. The offence was clearly proved; and the judge closed his summing up by observing, that the parties were not at a private meeting to hear a mere *enthusiast*, but to hear a licensed preacher in a licensed meeting-house. He noticed that no evidence had been adduced for the defendants, either in denial or extenuation; and he declared that no devout man could have gone into that place of worship, and remained with his hat on, as the defendant Hunt had done: besides, he had put out the candles, and his conduct was indecent and riotous. It was impossible to hear the

evidence, without being satisfied that the parties had been guilty of a most atrocious riot. The jury then returned a verdict of Guilty; and this effort to outrage with impunity every religious and social right failed.

The instance we shall cite of an attempt to make a legal aggression on religious liberty, occurred a little earlier. William Kent, a Methodist, in the county of Berks, was convicted before William Henry Price, Esq., in the penalty of twenty pounds, for preaching and praying in a meeting or conventicle, held in an uninhabited house, on Sunday evening, the 21st of October, 1810, in other manner than according to the Liturgy of the Church of England, when five persons or more were present. He appealed against the conviction; and the cause was tried at the General Quarter Sessions, at Reading, January sixteenth, 1811, before the Earl of Radnor, and four other county magistrates. The jury brought in their verdict, "Guilty of teaching or preaching." The counsel for the appellant objected to the verdict; and in Hilary Term an application was made to the Court of King's Bench for a *certiorari*, to remove the proceedings, in order that the same might be quashed. The application was granted by the court; and in the Easter Term following the rule was made absolute without opposition. The conviction and judgment of the Court of Quarter Sessions were set aside, and the penalty of twenty pounds returned by the convicting magistrate to the defendant.

Vexatious and hazardous nature of these struggles.

These victories, however, were exceedingly expensive, and involved immense trouble and annoyance. Nor were the struggles which obtained them carried on without apprehension, that by some perverse opinion of a judge, or obstinate prejudice of a jury, an unfavourable issue might be received, the consequences of which would be most disastrous.

Besides, the same spirit which dictated these persecuting proceedings was not unfrequently found on the bench; and it was soon ascertained that a vigorous attempt was being made to introduce a new practical construction of the Toleration Act, which might, at least to a very great extent, answer all the purposes contemplated by Lord Sidmouth's Bill. One prominent part of this new interpretation was to enable the magistrates to require, in addition to the usual oaths, that all applicants for licences should prove they were ministers of certain separate congregations. This novelty fell with special hardship on the Methodists, and from it, in many cases, no redress could be obtained.

These circumstances induced a very earnest desire on the part of the Methodists and Dissenters for such an alteration in the law as would not only clearly define, but also extend, their religious liberty. Many had very serious doubts as to the chance of success, and feared the result might damage the cause it was intended to serve. Attention had, however, been called to the subject by the information recently laid before Parliament. The archbishops and bishops had presented a return to the House of Lords of the numbers of places of worship in every parish containing one thousand persons and upwards. According to this return, the total of churches and chapels of the Church of England was two thousand five hundred and forty-seven; total of chapels and meeting-houses not of the Church of England, three thousand four hundred and fifty-seven.

This information excited conflicting feelings in the different parties concerned. Those opposed to Dissent, and who dreaded its increase, saw in the great preponderance of Dissenting places of worship serious cause

for indignation and alarm, and a most substantial reason for exerting themselves to prevent a further spread of the evil. On the other hand, these returns furnished the Methodists and Dissenters with grounds for demanding the protection of the law, and free liberty of worship, as their numbers were proved to be too great to be treated by any government with contempt or opposition.

Necessity for an alteration of the law.

In order, however, to give the general reader a correct idea of the great necessity for an alteration of the laws respecting liberty of conscience and worship, it may be necessary to state, that the worst of the persecuting laws made in the time of the Stuarts were still in force. Neither the Conventicle Act of Charles II., nor the notorious Five Mile Act, passed in the same reign, had been repealed. The Act of Toleration had exempted Dissenters from the operation of these statutes; but every one who could not claim exemption as a Dissenter was still liable to their penalties. And exemption on this ground many Methodists could not conscientiously claim. These inconveniences were greatly enhanced by the new construction put on the Toleration Act by many of the magistrates. And although several of these misconstructions had been set aside by the superior courts, others of great importance had been affirmed. The Court of King's Bench had held that a man, to entitle himself to a licence for preaching, was bound to show that he was the acknowledged teacher or preacher of some *particular congregation.* In the sense in which such a phrase would be ordinarily used, no Methodist preacher could do this; a fact well known and acted on by magistrates. At the Leeds Sessions, February, 1812, several Methodist preachers were refused licences to preach, because they were not attached to separate congregations. The decision of the same court also left the country in great uncertainty as

to the strict legal sense of the terms, "holy orders, or pretended holy orders." These combined causes gave the Methodist community great uneasiness and apprehension. So wide-spread was the alarm, that the Committee of Privileges, in May, 1812, issued a circular assuring the Connexion, "that no time would be lost in taking such measures as were likely to promote the success of an application to the legislature for relief." This circular was accompanied by the copy of a letter from the premier, Mr. Perceval, published with his consent, in which he promised to bring forward, or to support, such an application to Parliament.

The lamented assassination of that minister, on the eleventh of May, checked for a while the hopes which had been entertained. The Committee were, however, indefatigable; and with the able and energetic aid of Mr. Thomas Allan, who was, throughout, the inspiring genius of the whole effort, the work was carried on. It had been seen from the beginning, that the subject was too comprehensive and public to be dealt with successfully as a private Bill, or by unofficial parties. It was on this account that the loss of Mr. Perceval had been so severely felt. After some time the matter was brought under the attention of the Earl of Liverpool, the new premier. And it is but simple justice to that nobleman to say, that when he was informed that the grounds on which the measure was sought were "the inalienable right of every man to worship God agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience; and that he has a right to *hear* and to *teach* those Christian truths which he conscientiously believes, without any restraint or judicial interference from the civil magistrate, provided he do not hereby disturb the peace of the community;" and when it was urged, that a Bill founded on such principles would at once secure the rights of conscience, and give every needful

pledge to the state; he consented to meet the wishes of the Committee, fully and without delay. His lordship and his Majesty's ministers accordingly prepared a Bill which met the requirements of the case, and which, having safely passed both Houses of Parliament, received the royal assent on the twenty-ninth of July, 1812.

An Act, fully meeting the case, prepared and passed.

This act of justice and sound policy was carried, not only without serious opposition, but with the cordial consent and co-operation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Lord Chancellor took charge of the Bill in the House of Peers, and Lord Castlereagh, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the House of Commons. The friends of civil and religious liberty are under great obligations to Lords Stanhope, Holland, and Erskine, in the Upper House; and to William Wilberforce, James Stephen, Samuel Whitbread, and James Babington in the Commons.

When this Bill was published, it was accompanied with a series of observations on the privileges which it conferred, with some practical directions, from the pen of Mr. Thomas Allan, its indefatigable promoter. From these it is made fully apparent that the Act honestly effected all it professed, afforded every reasonable liberty for worship, and secured to Englishmen, inviolate, the sacred rights of conscience.

Mr. Jabez Bunting appointed superintendent of Halifax.

This year, a minister previously mentioned as sustaining a very eminent position in the Connexion, although still a young man, was brought into rather prominent notice. At the Conference of 1811, Jabez Bunting was appointed to the superintendency of Halifax. Any attempt to furnish a history of the middle age of Methodism must be lamentably defective, which does not contain some account of the early history and rising influence of this extraordinary man. We will, therefore, furnish the most extended sketch which

His early life, and rise to eminence.

our limited means will allow us to supply. In 1769, Richard Boardman was journeying from Leeds to Bristol to embark for his Mission to America. He tarried a night at the quiet little village of Monyash, in Derbyshire; and according to the custom of the time, preached in the evening. His text was,—The Prayer of Jabez, 1 Chron. iv. 9, 10. His word came with saving power to at least one young woman, and left a lasting impression on her mind. In process of time she married, and went to reside in Manchester. Ten years after hearing the missionary preach, the Lord blessed her with a first, and indeed an only, son, and "she called his name Jabez." While yet an infant, she carried him to Oldham Street chapel, and presented him to Wesley, when the venerable minister took the little one in his arms, and gave him his blessing.

The child grew up an object of intense solicitude to his pious mother, who frequently offered for him the prayer which came with such holy unction to her own heart, "O that Thou wouldest bless me indeed!" From his childhood she took him to the means of grace, including the lovefeasts. His habits and manner of life, when a young lad, displayed marks of this religious culture. His schoolfellows teased him for being a Methodist, which led his mother to speak to the master about removing him from the school: but he intimated that the mind of the boy was as far above mediocrity as his morals. "Make yourself easy on that head," said he; "for he will soon be at the head of the school, and then all the other boys will be under him." The prediction was soon fulfilled; his companions were as ready to honour, as they had been to plague, him. When Jabez was about fifteen, Alexander Mather, superintendent of the Circuit, strictly

enforced the rule that no person should be admitted to a lovefeast without a ticket, the usual token of membership. Mrs. Bunting was about to go to a lovefeast, and Jabez prepared to accompany her. His mother told him that he could not; and, with much solemnity; said, "I do not know what you think of it, Jabez; but to me it seems an awful thing, that, after having been carried there, you should now be excluded by your own fault." The words sank into his heart. To use his own expression, "the blow was struck in the right place." He soon became a regular member of Society, meeting in the Class of his maternal uncle. Under his instruction the youth was savingly converted to God.

Years passed on. He approached manhood; and his future course was soon to be defined. Providence greatly favoured him. His father, a pious and sensible man, had placed him in one of the best schools in the town. There he became very friendly with the son of Dr. Percival, then a very eminent physician and literary man in Manchester. Young Percival frequently took his youthful friend home; and the doctor became so much attached to young Bunting, that he received him into his family without a fee as his medical pupil and amanuensis. In his twentieth year, Bunting formed an acquaintance with the late James Wood, of Grove House, Manchester, then a young man, and a Methodist local preacher. At this time he also had thoughts of preaching. Indeed, the hand of God was evidently upon him; and by such means as the Head of the Church generally employs, all this was made apparent, and issued in an arrangement for him to preach in a cottage, or farm-house, in the presence of his friend. His text was, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." And in the surprise and

delight of the occasion, Mr. Wood, a strong-minded, polished, and intelligent man, and one of the most eloquent local preachers of his day, thought that he had never heard a better sermon; and has frequently declared that he doubted whether Mr. Bunting himself ever preached a better. Whatever friendly exaggeration there may be in this opinion, it cannot be doubted that Mr. Bunting started on his course of preaching, like William Pitt in senatorial oratory, at an elevation which precluded the reasonable hope of any future marked improvement.

Such a man would, of course, be thought eligible for the work of the ministry; and overtures tending to this issue were suggested by his friend. But a compliance involved a very serious temporal sacrifice. Dr. Percival had formed so high an opinion of him, that he had made arrangements by which Mr. Bunting should take his diploma at a continental university, free of expense; and had promised to introduce him to a Manchester practice, worth seven hundred pounds a year. His mother was now a widow, and he her only son. Yet, in these circumstances, both had grace to accede cheerfully to the Divine will. The pious mother had long since devoted her son to God, and had now no wish to recall the gift. The son, well knowing the emoluments and social position of a Methodist preacher, renounced all the flattering prospects which had been spread before his vision, and gave himself to the work of the ministry. When about twenty years and two months old, he was received on trial, and appointed to the Oldham Circuit at the Conference of 1799.*

* In preparing this notice, we have been indebted to a characteristic sketch of this eminent minister, which was published anonymously; but which, we happen to know, emanated from the pen of the Rev. William Arthur, A.M.

From the time of his admission, his rise to the highest point of influence was steady and rapid. Nor was this unexampled progress occasioned by the absence of real intellect and worth in the Methodist ministry of the day. The Conference contained Henry Moore, Joseph Benson, Samuel Bradburn, Adam Clarke, and others, who, if not of equal calibre, were far above mediocrity. Yet, in the presence of all these, Mr. Bunting won his way to the summit of honour, influence, and respect. It is utterly vain to discuss, as some have done, the precise means by which this result was brought about, as if it had been gained by some trick, bargain, or manœuvre. On a free and common platform, like that which Methodism presents, no man barters away his influence, power, or respect; no man can buy or steal any one of these. The only way to their attainment is by the judicious, consistent, and useful employment of the powers which God has given. This is the secret of Mr. Bunting's rise to the position which he so long, and so honourably, occupied.

The chapel at Halifax enlarged.

From the time that Mr. Bunting entered on the superintendency of Halifax, he was engaged in important affairs, besides his usual course of duty. The first object of concern was a considerable enlargement of the chapel, determined on at the September Quarterly Meeting, and forthwith carried into effect. In its enlarged and altered form, it was capable of containing two thousand persons. It was re-opened by James Wood, Jabez Bunting, and Richard Watson.

Trouble with the Luddite rioters there.

A still more serious difficulty arose in the fearful prevalence of a daring spirit of riot and insubordination, occasioned by a general impression among the operatives in the manufactories, that they were greatly injured by the extensive introduction of machinery. A system of organization

and military training was adopted, and secret oaths were administered. Armed bodies of men in disguise went about at night, destroying machinery and other property. Near Huddersfield a principal manufacturer was shot in broad day, in the public highway, by a number of infatuated men. They were called "Luddites," from their imaginary leader, Captain Ludd.

A mania like this could not pervade a country, without being exposed and condemned by Methodist preachers. Mr. Bunting bore down upon it with all the weight of his eloquence and authority at Halifax, and thus secured the hatred of the whole horde of Luddites. In the spring of 1812 one of the faction was shot whilst attempting to break into a mill near Cleckheaton. His confederates regarded his death as an honourable martyrdom, and determined to make the funeral an occasion for displaying their numbers and their strong feelings. They selected the Methodist burial-ground as the place of interment, and hoped to have Mr. Bunting to perform the service. He, however, had penetrated their designs, and refused; and the corpse was buried by the junior preacher. The chapel ground was crowded with a dense throng, who manifested such signs of unmistakeable displeasure, that the preacher had to make a very abrupt exit, as soon as he had closed the service. From that time, all who sympathized with the Luddite party showed the most determined hostility to Mr. Bunting. They, indeed, issued a positive threat that his life should be taken. The object of their ill-will was in no degree intimidated: in one of his discourses in the town, he alluded to the circumstance, and expressed his unshaken confidence in the watchful care of Providence, and his determination to do his duty. His friends, however, were so impressed with the ferocious character of the faction,

that for some time they did not allow him to go to his country appointments alone.

Mr. Daniel Isaac similarly harassed at Shields.

A combination, under the title of *the Brotherhood*, very analogous to that of the Luddites in spirit and object, was formed among the colliers in the Newcastle coal-mining district. Daniel Isaac, then at Shields, saw the danger which threatened social order from this movement, and fearing that some ill-informed or weak members of Society would be drawn aside by the delusion, determined to counteract the mischief. He took the best legal advice, wrote to the preachers of the Newcastle Circuit, and secured their co-operation. They then visited all the collieries where Methodist Societies existed, and instructed the members and hearers respecting the evil of the Brotherhood, both in a civil and a religious point of view; and exhorted those who had taken the oath to abjure it, and all others to keep clear of it. Many immediately renounced all connexion with this illegal faction; and, as soon as some had taken this step from a principle of conscience, many others did so lest they should be informed against; a death-blow was struck at the whole delusion, and it speedily passed away. Isaac's efforts, however, so enraged some of the most violent, that they set on him with bludgeons, as he was returning from preaching, and he narrowly escaped serious personal injury.

Sierra Leone. Origin of the colony, and of the Mission to it.

Sierra Leone appears on the Minutes of this year, with George Warren as preacher. The geographical situation of this colony, on the West Coast of Africa, is now too well known to require any observation; but it may be necessary to state the origin of the British settlement in that locality. When England was engaged in the war with the States of America, in which they achieved their independence, great numbers of Negroes left their masters, and

joined the British army. At the close of the conflict, it became a serious question what was to be done with these men. To leave them in the country was to hand back those who had faithfully adhered to our cause, nobly willing to shed their blood in our service, to hopeless slavery, and to the fury of the masters from whom they had escaped, and against whom they had fought. This, therefore, was out of the question. An asylum was accordingly offered them in Canada, and thither most of them repaired, although many came with their several corps to England. The latter, when the troops were disbanded,—as many of the regiments were soon afterward,—were in a short time found lying about the streets in wretchedness and starvation.

Moved by their sad condition, some benevolent gentlemen, knowing that the country about Sierra Leone was thinly populated, and that the climate was congenial to the Negro constitution, brought the case under the notice of the government, and requested that these poor men might be sent to the Western Coast of Africa, where they would be able to secure a living. The request was granted. The territory, about twenty square miles at Sierra Leone, was purchased of the native chiefs; and about four hundred of these Negroes, with about sixty women of abandoned character who had engaged to accompany them, were taken at the public expense, and located on the territory. Few persons will now regard the remedy as more hopeful than the evil it was intended to remove. That four hundred disbanded Negro soldiers, and a number of London prostitutes, should—without teachers, government, or religion—be expected to settle down as orderly and industrious colonists, notwithstanding the mildness of the climate and the fertility of the soil, seems a most extravagant hope. The

whole company soon either died or dispersed, and the ground was again unoccupied.

This occurred about 1788 or 1789. And, as the question of the Slave Trade had attracted considerable attention, the leaders in that movement thought that this purchased territory offered a favourable opportunity for forming a free colony on an important part of the African coast. A company was formed, and the requisite fund soon subscribed. Wilberforce, Thornton, Clarkson, Granville Sharp, and others, then applied to Parliament, and obtained the necessary legal powers; the company was incorporated, and its operations began. As this was not merely an attempt to establish a factory for trade, according to the manner of the times, but an effort to form an important centre of civilization for the purpose of checking the inhuman slave traffic, great care was taken in selecting the settlers. Artisans of various trades, of sober habits and good character, with a few soldiers, formed the basis of the colony. They reached their destination in safety; a town was laid out, and they began to build; a government was inaugurated; worship was established according to the forms of the National Church, with perfect freedom for those who wished to adopt another mode to follow the dictates of their conscience; and everything went on hopefully. More inhabitants being found desirable, the Negroes left in Canada were thought of; and as the climate of that country was very unsuitable for the Negro race, one thousand one hundred and thirty-one of these, who were willing to leave the cold country of Canada, were, in 1792, transferred to this new settlement. Among these were many members of the Methodist Society, including two or three local preachers and leaders, who, on arriving at Sierra Leone, proceeded to establish the reli-

gious privileges to which they had been accustomed. The information of their arrival led to the entry in the Minutes of 1792, in the list of Circuits, with the number of members, "Sierra Leone, coloured people, 223." The same entry, without any variation of the numbers, is repeated successively the four following years, and then omitted. The wish to provide this little band of pious people with a regular ministry, and to spread religion in the colony, caused the intimation, that a missionary would be sent, to be inserted in the Minutes of 1808; a promise which was this year fulfilled.

When Dr. Coke was travelling in Cornwall, in the winter of 1810, soliciting subscriptions in support of the Missions, he was delighted to find that George Warren, then labouring at Helston, had thought much of the want of a missionary at Sierra Leone. Stimulated, rather than deterred, by the circumstances and climate of the colony, he offered himself for that arduous duty; declaring that, "for a long season, his mind had been deeply impressed with a persuasion that it was his duty to visit Africa; that even now he would prefer this station to any other; and that he was fully confident these impressions came from God." Immediately after Warren had made this declaration, Coke received a letter from the superintendent of Dewsbury, informing him of three pious young men of his acquaintance, who had volunteered to go to the same colony, as teachers, schoolmasters, or in any other capacity in which they could be useful. These facts were laid before the Missionary Committee, who directed the young Yorkshiremen to be examined at the District Meeting. These important preparations having been satisfactorily made, Warren, with his three companions, well equipped

in every respect, and provided with a plentiful supply of Bibles, embarked at Liverpool on the twenty-first of September, 1811, for their appointed destination.

Voyage of the missionaries to Sierra Leone.

It may be observed as a singular incident, that they sailed in a vessel manned entirely by men of colour, and commanded by Captain Paul Cuffee, of the same race and complexion as his crew. He was a pious Quaker, and "we have," says Dr. Coke, "reason to believe there was not a seaman on board who did not fear God." In the course of their voyage they were pursued for two days by a schooner, doubtless a French privateer, and which, at three o'clock in the afternoon of the second day, had gained so much upon them that their capture appeared inevitable. In deep concern the missionaries, accompanied by the captain, retired to the cabin, and engaged in earnest prayer to Almighty God. Not long after they had solemnly commended themselves to the Divine protection, a breeze sprang up, which soon increased to a gale, and enabled them to distance their pursuer more rapidly than he had gained on them: in a few hours they lost sight of their enemy and their fears.

Their reception, labour, and success.

On arriving at Sierra Leone, Warren and his friends were introduced to the Rev. Mr. Nylander, the chaplain of the colony, by Captain Cuffee, to whom he was well known. The chaplain received them with every mark of politeness, kindness, and respect. They were hospitably entertained by Mr. Nichols, a respectable merchant; and were soon visited by Mr. Gordon, the principal Methodist local preacher. When he learned Warren's profession, and the object of himself and his companions in coming to Sierra Leone, he was astonished beyond measure; and "exclaimed, with a rapturous pathos which no art can imitate, 'This is

what we have been praying for so long, and now the Lord has answered our prayers!'"

But, delighted as this good man was, his conduct showed that he was not only pious, but sensible and discreet; and equally able to guard against deception, and to avail himself of every offered benefit for the Society to the utmost. On leaving the missionary, he went to Mr. Brown, another local preacher, and they called together the heads of the Society, and announced the arrival of the strangers; when it was resolved, in the first instance, to ascertain whether they were properly accredited by Dr. Coke or the Methodist Conference; and, if so, it was agreed to have them formally introduced to the Society. Gordon and Brown accordingly waited on Warren, and desired a private interview. They inquired whether he had any letter from the Methodist authorities in England respecting his appointment. The missionary gave them a letter which Dr. Coke had written for the express purpose. The brethren were greatly delighted, and it was agreed to convene the Society the ensuing evening. At that meeting, which was opened with singing and prayer, Dr. Coke's letter, accrediting Warren as a Methodist missionary to Sierra Leone, was read. Mr. Brown, in a very feeling manner, expressed the happiness which he felt at receiving a person appointed to take the charge of their little Society, adding, that of late he had had the firmest confidence that God was about to provide for them a minister. A Mr. Wilkinson declared that he had felt a similar persuasion for some time, and had often expressed his conviction to his friends. Mr. Gordon, who had for several years acted as superintendent, stated that the direction of the Society had long been a great burden on his mind, and that he was highly gratified to find that a person had arrived from Europe to relieve

him from a weight which he had long been compelled to bear. In this general satisfaction the Society acquiesced, and the meeting concluded with smiles of congratulation, and devout thanksgiving to God. The following day, the missionaries waited on Governor Maxwell, who received them courteously, and told them that, although it was his duty to respect in a particular manner the Established Church, he was not opposed to other sects, and sincerely respected all good men. He expressed his satisfaction to receive them as missionaries and persons desirous of promoting education in the colony, and gave them full and free permission to prosecute their labours.

Every difficulty being removed, on the fifteenth of November, 1811, Warren opened his commission, preaching in the chapel to a crowded congregation. It was a deeply solemn and affecting season. The people were delighted with the truths they heard, and the pious Negroes rejoiced exceedingly. The next day the missionary met the stewards and leaders of the whole Society, and was pleased to find that, although many usages, unknown to Methodism in England, had been introduced, they were all directed to encourage and maintain vital religion, and that great attention had been given to discipline. In these discussions, some persons inquired whether Warren was legally qualified to administer the sacraments; and on being informed that he was, they were very glad, and an early day was fixed for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The missionary, however, considering the importance of avoiding all occasion of offence, and of maintaining to the utmost a religious union among the inhabitants, arranged that the Methodist worship should not interfere with the service in the church, nor prevent any receiving the Lord's Supper there. The chaplain had

conducted himself with the most enlightened liberality; and the Methodists responded by equally cautious and conciliatory conduct.

The ministry of the missionaries was attended with the Divine blessing; the congregations increased; frequent applications for admission into the Society were received. All things wore a smiling aspect, and betokened success. Indeed, the missionaries on their arrival found one hundred and ten members in Society, although in England, before they left, these were estimated to be about fifty. Many conversions, under Warren's ministry, soon increased their number. But this course of prosperity was interrupted. Rendered too confident by continual health, Warren laboured even more than would have been prudent in his native country, and fell a sacrifice to his zeal. His death was sudden; but his uniform and deep piety gave all who knew him an assurance that he had passed away to be for ever with the Lord. Nearly two years elapsed before his place was filled by the appointment of another missionary to that interesting colony.

The Conference of 1812.

Nearly three hundred ministers assembled at the Leeds Conference of 1812, beginning on the twenty-seventh of July. Joseph Entwisle was elected president, and Dr. Coke re-appointed secretary. The Circuits now numbered three hundred and twenty-four, being an increase of nine.*

* Chelmsford Mission, Bletchingly Mission, Framlingham, Littleport, Marlborough Mission, Torquay, South Devon Mission, Kingswood, Minehead, Cirencester Mission, Caerphilly, Neath, Lampeter, Denbigh, Ledbury Mission, Altringham, Worksop Mission, Holderness, and Gainsborough, ceased to be numbered as Circuits; while Huntingdon, Leighton Buzzard, Lowestoff, New Buckenham, Ely, Brixham, Kingsbridge, Scilly Isles, Dunster, Frome, Winchcombe, Cardiff, St. David's, Swansea, Holywell, Llangollen, Warrington, Wigan, Sowerby Bridge, Selby, Bradwell, Uttoxeter, Boston, Patrington, Pickering, Durham, Gateshead, and Aughrim, were now made to rank as Circuits.

A net increase of more than ten thousand members was the result of the year's labours. Sixty-nine ministerial candidates were accepted, and among them John Anderson, whose stirring eloquence, when once heard, could never be forgotten; Thomas H. Squance, who preached the first Methodist sermon in Continental India; and James Dixon, probably the most able philosophic preacher Methodism, or any other church, has ever known, and who still lives with the inner faculties clear as the noon-day, and the heart ripening for heaven. Three were put away from the ministry; four retired from failing health; and eleven died in the Lord. None of the last were men of peculiar note in the Connexion, and the briefest notice must suffice:—JOHN BROWN, "a burning and a shining light," had only travelled ten years, and died, declaring, that the bed on which he had endured so much pain, had been to him "a bed of roses:"—JOHN GRANT had a memory so richly stored with the word of God, that many called him "The walking Bible." "Strength of intellect, depth of thought, and justness of reasoning," were manifest in all his discourses. "This is the happiest day of my life," was his last sentence:—ROBERT COSTERDINE, "a worthy brother," was awakened under the preaching of Nelson and Whitefield. He entered the ministry in 1764, sustained a useful career for many years, and now departed by a sudden, but welcome death:—THOMAS TRETHEWEY, a "man of solid piety and respectable talents," had been long oppressed with bodily infirmities, and died in peace:—ROBERT FINNEY, simple, unaffected, and godly, had preached the Gospel thirteen years, and, "after passing through deep waters," entered into rest:—SAMUEL BOTTS preached in physical weakness the Sabbath before his death, and bade farewell to earth, saying, "My soul is centred in God.

The Lord will provide. Heaven! Glory!"—JOHN GRACE died on his way to the Irish Conference; and DERMIDD M'DERMIDD, on a voyage to California, in search of health:—WILLIAM COOPER and WILLIAM RUTLEDGE departed in the early days of their ministerial probation:—DAVID VIPOND closed a short, but blessed ministry, shouting, as he looked upward, "Eternal life is there! eternal glory!"

It must not be supposed from the number of places annually omitted from the list of Circuits, that Methodism had failed in those neighbourhoods. The change frequently arose from the fact that the place first named was not so favourable a centre of Methodist operations, as some other town in the neighbourhood. For this reason Torquay was dropped this year, and Brixham appears in its stead. Nor must it be thought, because so many Mission Stations disappear from the list, that the efforts in these places proved abortive; on the contrary, this is usually a proof of success. The South Devon Mission, as an instance, ceases this year; but then its fruits appear in the erection of the Kingsbridge Circuit, now for the first time found in the list.

Its transactions.

The thanks of the Conference were given to the late Committee of Privileges; "but most particularly to Mr. Butterworth and Mr. Allan, for their indefatigable, successful, and gratuitous labours to obtain that invaluable law which has lately received the royal assent, and by which our religious liberties are confirmed and secured." Several minutes were made regulating the interpretation of our rules relating to the preachers called out into the ministry in the course of the year; prescribing the manner of the administration of baptism; for reviving and extending the band-meetings; regulating the annual examination at the District Meetings; for relieving the financial affairs of the Connexion from embarrassment; for paying off the

debt of the Missionary Society; for appointing a general superintendent to the West Indies; for holding District Meetings there; and several others respecting the affairs of Woodhouse Grove.

Mr. Richard Watson again received into the Methodist ministry.

Among the names of the preachers received into full Connexion is Richard Watson. The return of this eminent minister to the communion of his early friends must be explained. Our last reference to him was when he wrote a letter to a Manchester newspaper in opposition to Lord Sidmouth's Bill, May, 1811. At the ensuing New Connexion Conference, held in June the same year, he was re-elected secretary: and again appointed to Manchester. He had not spent many months of the year in his work, before his health again failed. The bleeding of his lungs returned with worse symptoms than before. He was utterly unable to perform his duties, and there seemed very little probability that he would be so far restored as permanently to endure the labours of the itinerant ministry. He had long been dissatisfied with the discipline of the New Connexion, and was, in some degree, unhappy in his union with that community. He therefore tendered his resignation to the Circuit authorities, and retired to Liverpool; where, after a few months, he offered himself as a private member in the Wesleyan Connexion. In taking this step, he acted in accordance with the advice of some of his most intelligent and confidential friends belonging to the New Connexion. They thought that, with his views, he was likely to be more happy and useful among his old associates, from whom he had formerly departed under the pressure of unkind treatment and strong temptation.

Watson was under great obligations to the preachers and people of the New Connexion. They had received

him when he was comparatively unknown, without friends or influence; and treated him with uniform affection, respect, and great consideration. They had honoured him beyond his years, and placed him in Circuits best adapted to the state of his health. Nor did he leave them until he was unable to discharge his duties: and then he gave the best proof of his high principle and sincerity of mind. In his shattered state of health, with a wife and two children, there was little probability that he would be received as a Wesleyan minister, even if his strength should return so as to enable him to bear the labour. The fact unquestionably is, that when Watson entered the New Connexion, he felt no objection to its discipline or economy; but that, as he became acquainted with its operation, his judgment disapproved some parts of it, and he was severely tried in administering it. Hence, when received as a private member into the old Connexion, he said, with deep feeling, that fo the first time during the last eleven years his mind was fully at rest. But, as Mr. Jackson has well observed, it was with the system, and not with the people, of the New Connexion, that he was dissatisfied. With many of them he cherished a sincere and ardent Christian friendship, and held a loving correspondence, for several years.

As soon as he was able to attend to anything requiring mental or physical exertion, he engaged himself at an annual salary to his friend Mr. Kaye, as the editor of the "Liverpool Courier," and for other literary services. Mr. Kaye highly valued Watson's abilities, and counted largely on the proceeds from the productions of his pen. But, able as he was as a literary man, preaching was the great work in which his soul delighted. When, therefore, his health was so far restored as to enable him to take an

occasional service, he consented to act as a local preacher; and on the second of March, Mr. Entwisle proposed his reception at the Quarterly Local Preachers' Meeting. The proposal occasioned an animated discussion, which issued, however, in Watson being placed upon the plan as a local preacher. By Entwisle's kind attention, he occasionally preached for the ministers in the town chapels; and, as his health continued to improve, the preachers urged him to give himself again to the work of the ministry. Mr. Bunting, who had some previous acquaintance with him, visited Liverpool, and joined in the solicitations of Entwisle and his colleagues. "Mr. Watson at length consented, and was recommended to the District Meeting, and afterwards to the Conference, by whom he was very cordially received. The practical errors of his youth were buried in oblivion; the men who had formerly taken part against him, and had unhappily been the means of separating him from the Connexion, uttered not a word against his re-admission; for his character, both as a man of God, and a good minister of Jesus Christ, was established; and, without subjecting him to any further probation, he was placed precisely in the circumstances in which he stood, when, eleven years before, he left his work in the Hinckley Circuit." *

How strange are the mental exercises to which men of God are subjected in their way through this world! When Richard Watson resigned his position in the New Connexion, and threw himself, with broken health, on the precarious produce of his pen, he evidently made a great sacrifice. After a very few months he now made a pecuniary sacrifice to become a Methodist minister. Mr. Kaye so highly valued his services, that Watson was far from consulting his secular advantage in leaving him. But this

* Jackson's "Life of Watson," p. 116.

was not all. His worth and the power of his pen were well known and appreciated in other quarters. "Overtures of a very flattering nature were made to him at this crisis by persons in authority, if he would remove to London, and employ his pen in the public service."* Not the least amongst the marvels of Methodism is the amount of this sort of sacrifice made by its ministers. How often have we seen two young men, equal in talent and social position, and occupying nearly an equal place as local preachers! One of these has, under the influence of the Holy Spirit and the call of the church, given himself to the work of the ministry. The other has engaged in business, or devoted his life to some honourable profession. The latter has earned a position amongst the wealthy which has given his children free access to a status among the aristocracy of the next generation; whilst the former has been found, at the close of a long and laborious career, just as he was at the beginning,—with bread for himself and his children, and hardly that, but certainly nothing more. "Is there, then, unrighteousness with the great Master?" "Surely, their 'judgment is with the Lord, and their reward with their God.'" There is nothing in these results to deter men of the greatest and most accomplished minds, who are called by the Holy Spirit to the work of the ministry, from following the example of Jabez Bunting, Richard Watson, and other noble-minded and gifted men, who have sacrificed the gains of earth to lay up treasure in heaven.

And appointed to Wakefield.

On returning to the Wesleyan ministry, Watson was appointed to Wakefield, with his friend James Buckley, who had proposed his acceptance in the Conference. As promptly as possible he removed to that town, and

* Jackson's "Life of Watson," p. 118.

entered upon his ministerial labour. His mind was now perfectly at ease. He was engaged in the work which, without any qualification, both his judgment and his conscience approved; and he performed it, not only with great ability, but with such fidelity and affection as won the esteem and love of the people.

A cruel act of intolerance punished.

During this year a cruel act of intolerance, directed against a Methodist local preacher, was severely punished by the authority of law. On Sunday, the fourteenth of June, 1812, a few weeks before the Act for extending the Liberty of Worship received the royal assent, William Wood, a local preacher, was preaching in the open air at Audlem, in the County Palatine of Chester, when he was violently assaulted by an attorney named Groom, who seized him, whilst in prayer, and dragged him on the ground a considerable distance. It was afterwards alleged that Groom was sworn a special constable for the occasion, and held a warrant from Sir Corbet Corbet, a magistrate, against Wood. But this was not stated before the preacher was seized and dragged away. Two days afterward, Wood was served with a warrant from the same magistrate, for preaching in a place not certified and registered according to law. He appeared in obedience to the summons, and, on the oaths of the constable and Groom, he was fined twenty pounds, and his goods levied and sold to pay the amount, whereby the poor man was reduced almost to beggary.

By the advice and help of his friends, Wood commenced an action against Groom for an assault. The case was tried at Chester, April twenty-seventh, 1813. It was proved that the proceedings against Wood were taken at the instigation of the Rev. Mr. Breakspeare, rector of the parish. After a lengthened investigation, the jury found a verdict for the plaintiff, damages £200. The following fifth of May, a

motion was made in the Court of King's Bench, for a rule to set aside the verdict, and enter a nonsuit. The grounds assigned for the motion were, that, Groom being a special constable, and holding a warrant against Wood, the verdict was contrary to law; and if it were not so, that the damages were excessive. Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough, however, decided otherwise. He held that the verdict was according to law, and that the amount of damages was reasonable: the rule was, therefore, refused, and the verdict affirmed. These proceedings taught parties who desired to indulge themselves in violently abridging the religious liberties of their neighbours, that the gratification of their desires was likely to prove very troublesome and expensive.

Gracious revival at Bath. Conversion of Mrs. Charles Penny.

The work of grace in the salvation of men through the ministry of the Methodist preachers was still carried on. The labours of Henry Moore and his colleagues at Bath were specially owned of God. An extensive revival took place there, and many were converted. Among these new converts was Charles Penny, who afterwards became a Methodist preacher. "The witness of the Holy Ghost which he then received, enabling him to cry, 'Abba, Father,' he retained through life; and the frequent reference to it in his copious journal shows that his apprehension of this blessing was not vague, but scriptural, accurate, and well-defined. He writes, 'I can realize God by an act of living faith, and am assured that He is mine, and I am His. I find this in the absence of that great joy which I sometimes feel. I have not only experienced this in time past, but enjoy it now. How do I know this? By mere inference? No! The Spirit of God beareth witness with my spirit that I am a child of God, of which I can no more doubt than I can doubt of my existence.'" *

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1838, p. 401.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE CONFERENCE OF 1813 TO THAT OF 1816.

The Conference of 1813.

THE Liverpool Conference, commencing on the twenty-eighth of July, 1813, does not appear to have been marked by any peculiar circumstances. Nearly three hundred preachers were present. The votes for the presidency were in favour of Walter Griffith, and Dr. Coke again occupied his old position as secretary. The number of Circuits was now three hundred and thirty-six, an increase of twelve.* An increase of nearly ten thousand nine hundred members was a blessed reward for the labours of the past year. Thirty-six candidates for the ministry were received on trial, including John Bowers, who has since passed the presidential chair, and Joseph Beaumont, who finished a splendid, though somewhat erratic, ministerial career by a tragic, but no doubt triumphant, death in the pulpit, when just commencing a Sabbath morning service. "One preacher was laid aside for want of competent gifts;" three retired on account of health; one "left of his own accord;" and "three or four, against whom some complaints had been made, were subjected to censure."

Obituary of preachers.

The "insatiate archer" had again drawn his bow, and winged his arrow, with unerring aim, at the hearts of twelve

* Farnham Mission, Barnet, Winchcomb, Stanton, St. David's, Neston Mission, Wensleydale, and Innishowen were no longer numbered as Circuits; while the following were placed on the list:—North Walsham, Bury St. Edmund's, Swaffham, Chipping Norton, Plymouth, Cheltenham, Axminster, Midsomer Norton, Lampeter, Buxton, Salford, Woodhouse Grove, Denby, Market Raisen, Alford, Spalding, Guisborough, Tanfield, Dunbar, and Strabane.

of the ministers. GEORGE SNOWDEN, "who travelled upwards of forty years with considerable approbation and usefulness, put off his harness at Macclesfield," in his seventy-fifth year:—JOHN EASTON, naturally timid; patient under heavy affliction; a lover of his brethren; in dress neat, and a great economist of time; useful rather than popular; and diligent in every part of his holy calling; obtained religion in early life, and finished a long ministry, saying, "What a mercy! I have not a doubt on my mind; for my Master, whom I have served so many years, is with me even to the end:"—JOSEPH HARPER entered the ministry in 1767, "did the work of the Lord faithfully," and was "taken away with a stroke" of paralysis at the ripe age of eighty-four:—The Lord greatly owned the labours of WILLIAM WILLIAMS in every Circuit, and the Church lost by his death, after sixteen years' toil, one of her ablest and most promising sons:—WILLIAM DRIVER died in the West Indies, after a successful course of service:—LAWRENCE HARGREAVES was cut down by typhus fever in the very opening of his ministry:—GEORGE WARREN'S short career and death were recorded in our last chapter:—EDWARD GREEN and DAVID MAILEN were both young men of promise, just commencing ministerial life:—JOHN WILSON and RICHARD ELLIOTT were in the prime of life, and died in "the full assurance of hope."

Its transactions.

As the importance of the Committee of Privileges had been so fully shown, it had been gradually enlarged, until it included the president, the secretary, all the preachers of the London, Brentford, and Deptford Circuits, with about twenty of the most influential gentlemen connected with Methodism in all parts of the country. The continued and rapid extension of the Connexion by the addition of members, the necessarily increased number of preachers,

and the multiplication of chapels, still embarrassed the Conference by financial difficulties. The deficiency of the year, including the balance of debt brought forward, was above five thousand pounds.

In order to remedy this state of things, several measures were devised. A circular letter was sent to the trustees throughout the Connexion, requesting contributions from those chapel trusts which were in circumstances to afford them, toward the general deficiency. A public collection was ordered to be made in all the chapels toward the same object. No collections in aid of chapels were allowed this year, except in the Circuit in which the chapel was situated. A circular was also sent to the stewards of the Societies and Circuits, urging the necessity of making exertions to induce their Societies at least to comply with the rule, and raise, on "the average, one penny per week, to be paid in the Classes, and one shilling a quarter, to be paid when the tickets are renewed, for each member;" and also to adopt such other measures, with respect to the number of married and single preachers, that each Circuit might bear its full share of the general burden. A part of the plan then devised for bringing the expenditure of the Connexion within the compass of its resources, was the rule now so familiar to Methodists as an established law; namely, that "no additional single preacher shall in future be sent to any Circuit, unless such Circuit engage to support an additional married preacher at the end of four years at the latest." Other minutes, relating to finance, to the erection of chapels, suggesting inquiry as to whether there are not more preachers in some Circuits than are absolutely necessary, and giving direction to the Stationing and the District Committees, were adopted; together with a number of general and miscellaneous orders and regulations.

Dr. Coke's application for leave to initiate a Mission to India.

The grand business of this Conference, however, was its arrangements to send missionaries to the East, for the purpose of making an attempt to introduce the Gospel among the natives of India.

It was well known to Dr. Coke's friends some time before, that he had set his heart upon this work. As early as 1806, when travelling in Cornwall, he obtained from Colonel Sandys, a pious gentleman who had served twenty years in India, much important information respecting the religious condition of that country, and the prospects of missionary success. Dr. Coke communicated this information to the Missionary Committee; and at their request Colonel Sandys sent them a written statement of what he had verbally communicated to Coke.

Attention called to the importance of Missions to India.

The debates in Parliament, on the renewal of the Company's charter, directed special attention to this subject; and the more so, as a resolution which merely tolerated the introduction into that country "of useful knowledge, and of religious and moral improvement," subject "to the authority of the local government," was violently opposed in the House of Commons. The death of the pious and devoted Henry Martyn took place in Persia, October sixteenth, 1812, after a brilliant career of missionary labour and usefulness, which contributed to impress the British public with the practicability of reaching the Asiatic mind by judicious and earnest Christian instruction. Indeed, too much importance can scarcely be attached to the successes of Martyn, considering under whose auspices they were prosecuted, and the time when they occurred. But, with the highest esteem and veneration for this great and good man, we feel bound to say, that it is not just to place him, who went out as a chaplain under the East India Company, in comparison with ordinary missionaries to the East.

Martyn during the period of his missionary labours was in the receipt of one thousand two hundred pounds *per annum*, —a salary very different from that received by those who followed him as bearers of the Gospel to the East. Independently of other considerations, it enabled him to do more in one year than other missionaries might be able to effect in several. Others, indeed, had scarcely a reasonable assurance that their actual necessities would be met. This fact is not mentioned as involving any fault in this eminent man, but in justice to the relation which he holds to others engaged in the same work.

The travels and stirring publications of Claudius Buchanan also did much to turn the attention of the Christians of England to the moral and spiritual misery and degradation of British subjects in India. His vivid portraiture of the abominations of Juggernaut first gave a public and popular exhibition of these foul and bloody superstitions. Coke, anxious to avail himself of every means of information, put himself in communication with Buchanan, who was the friend, correspondent, and relation of Colonel Sandys. From him Coke received further information, and a confirmation of that previously obtained from the colonel. It is a beautiful subject for contemplation to mark this venerable minister, at the age of sixty-six, planning the evangelization of India. We joyfully turn away from contemplating the arts of statesmen and the feats of warriors, to see an old man, who had succeeded in planting and directing successful Missions in America, the West Indies, Gibraltar, Sierra Leone, Ireland, Wales, and in the neglected districts of England, casting his eye across the mighty deep, and bending his whole soul to the glorious work of preaching Christ crucified to the heathens of India.

Dr. Coke zealously prosecutes inquiries on the subject.

The intensity of his desire to effect this object.

To an intimate Christian friend, who endeavoured to dissuade him from the enterprise, principally on account of his age, and the difficulty, at his time of life, of learning to pronounce a new language, he replied, about a month before the Conference:—"I am now dead to Europe and alive for India. God Himself has said to me, 'Go to Ceylon.' I am as much convinced of the will of God in this respect, as that I breathe; so fully convinced, that methinks I had rather be set naked on the coast of Ceylon, without clothes, and without a friend, than not go there. The Portuguese language is much spoken all round the coast of Ceylon, and indeed all along the coast of India. According to Dr. Buchanan, there are 500,000 Christians (nominal Christians, at least) in Ceylon; and there are only two ministers to take care of them. I am learning the Portuguese language continually, and I am perfectly certain I shall conquer it before I land in Ceylon. The fleets sail in October and January. If the Conference employ me to raise the money for the outset, I shall not be able to sail till January. I shall bear my own expenses, of course. I 'll request you to speak to the preachers, to see whether a preacher or two can be procured, who will consent to travel with me."

With these views and feelings the Doctor attended the Conference, and propounded his whole plan. Many were startled at its magnitude, others at its daring; and there was considerable opposition. We prefer giving the account from a manuscript in the handwriting of Benjamin Clough, one of the missionaries, who witnessed the whole scene. "When the subject was first named, many rose to oppose. Mr. Benson, with great vehemence, declared that it would be the ruin of Methodism. The debate was adjourned till the day following. Dr.

Coke walked down the street, leaning on Mr. Clough's arm, in unutterable agony: the tears flowed down his cheeks, and, almost broken-hearted, he retired to his room to pray. The following morning he was not at the Conference before breakfast. Mr. Clough called to inquire for him. The Doctor had not come down from his room: Mr. Clough knocked at the door, and, recognising his voice, Dr. Coke asked him to walk in. There he saw the most affecting spectacle. The Doctor had not been in bed, and his dishevelled silvery locks showed something of his night's distress. Mr. Clough asked what was the matter. Pointing to the floor, the doctor said, 'There I have spent hours in pleading with God in behalf of India.' They together went to the Conference. When the subject was resumed, the Doctor delivered a most energetic thrilling address, which produced such an impression, that it was at once moved, seconded, and carried, that the Mission should be forthwith established. Mr. Barber was either the mover or seconder. Shortly afterwards Dr. Coke called Mr. Clough out of the Conference, and they went down the street together. With joy beaming in his eye, and a full heart, Dr. Coke said, 'Did I not tell you that God would answer prayer?'"

His resource when the Conference objected.

And ultimate success.

It must not be supposed that this opposition was factious, or that the Conference was swayed, against its judgment, to assent to this important measure. We must recognise the directing hand of God, whose potent influence enabled His servants on one day to dare difficulties from which they had shrunk the day before. These difficulties, considering the embarrassed financial state of the Connexion, were very great. Yet, when the Doctor detailed the providential circumstances which led him to desire the establishment of this Mission, the favourable

disposition which some men in power had manifested toward it, the reasons which led him to visit the eastern regions of the globe; and especially when he presented himself, and six other preachers, who were prepared to dare all the dangers of the enterprise; and added, boldly and generously, that if the Connexion could not consistently bear the expense of the undertaking, he was prepared, out of his own private fortune, to defray the cost of the outfit to the extent of six thousand pounds; his brethren were alike amazed at the magnitude of the work, and the manner in which it had been laid open to their efforts. Awed into acquiescence by such a splendid example of devotion and generosity, they gave their consent. It was therefore resolved, that "the Conference authorizes and appoints Dr. Coke to undertake a Mission to Ceylon and Java; and allows him to take with him six missionaries, exclusively of one for the Cape of Good Hope." It was intended that three of the missionaries should settle in Ceylon, one repair to Java, and the other two travel with Coke, in such places, and in such ways, as his judgment and existing circumstances might direct.

Preparations for the Mission.

The preachers who consented to accompany the Doctor in this godly enterprise, were James Lynch, William Ault, George Erskine, William M. Harvard, Thomas H. Squance, and Benjamin Clough. The four former were already in the ministry; the two latter were now received on probation. These arrangements having been made, the Doctor and his companions repaired to London to make preparations for their departure. Dr. Coke's first care was to secure the services of an able Portuguese teacher, that they might all study that language, as far as their time would allow, before their embarkation. A large assortment of clothes, books, and other articles necessary for their

comfort, was provided. As Harvard and Squance were acquainted with the printing business, a printing press, with types, and other necessary appliances, was added to the stock. Two of these missionaries, Ault and Harvard, were married, and their wives accompanied them.

Necessity of increased support for Methodist Missions.

The immediate prospect of Coke's departure from England led the friends of Missions among the Methodists to great searchings of heart, as to the means by which this rapidly increasing section of the work of God was to be sustained. The loss of his personal supervision might be supplied by the appointment of some other active and zealous minister in conjunction with the Missionary Committee; but Coke had collected a large portion of the pecuniary supplies, by his established character and indefatigable perseverance; and, when these means failed, was ever ready to draw on his own purse to the full extent of his power. How corresponding, and even enlarged, supplies were to be provided when the Doctor left the country, and the necessities of the cause had been increased by the requirements of this great enterprise in the eastern hemisphere, was a problem difficult to solve. Dr. Coke had thought of organizing Missionary Societies before he left England; and the London Missionary Society, founded in 1795, had set an excellent example of organization. Indeed, as that Society was exceedingly catholic in its constitution, and embraced Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Independents amongst its promoters, there was danger lest part of the support which the Methodist Missions had every reason to expect, should be diverted into the funds of this more general, but truly excellent, institution. It was, therefore, necessary, that some means should be devised for exhibiting the claims of the Methodist Missions in as public and popular

a manner as was used to procure support for the London Society.

Means adopted to provide of the emergency.

The Methodists did not sit supinely inactive amid these growing necessities. It was not, as stated by mistake in a respectable and interesting work,* "in the state of anxious inquiry occasioned by the death of Dr. Coke," that the Rev. George Morley, of Leeds, suggested to his brethren in that District, and the friends in general, the propriety of forming a Missionary Society in that town. The suggestion was put forth at least as early as September, 1813, full three months before Coke left the shores of England for India.

Formation of a Missionary Society for the Leeds District.

In no place could an effort of this kind have been made with greater hope of success than in Leeds. George Morley, who desired the formation of such an institution, was superintendent of the Circuit; Jabez Bunting, whose comprehensive and ardent mind was devoted to the cause of Missions, was chairman of the District. Many of the Methodists there were wealthy, most of them open-hearted and zealous. Several Methodist families were known "to be in the habit of contributing weekly or monthly contributions towards the support of Missions belonging to another religious community," there being no Methodist organization for receiving small sums for missionary purposes. The subject having been well considered, an address was issued, proposing the formation of a Methodist Missionary Society for the Leeds District; and assigning, as reasons for such a course, the "increasing opportunities for evangelizing heathen nations, the excellent example of other Christian Societies, and the loss of the personal exertions of Dr. Coke." The first of these "principally refers to the

* "The Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society. y John Morison, D.D.," vol. i., p. 189.

facilities and protection afforded by a recent enactment of the legislature, to all who are desirous of propagating the religion of Jesus Christ in Hindostan and the neighbouring countries." The second reason, as was observed at the time, if it refers to raising funds by quarterly, monthly, or weekly subscriptions, is very strange, inasmuch as by adopting this course the Methodists only imitated that which other Societies had previously borrowed from Methodism. Long and violently had the Methodists been reproached for resorting to this means for the support of the ministry. Time, however, which tests the soundness or fallacy of all institutions, showed the excellence of this arrangement, and it was adopted by all parties for the support of Bible, Missionary, and Tract Societies. Probably, however, this part of the address referred principally to the holding of public meetings, and other parts of the organization of Missionary Societies.

The public meeting.

The address was soon followed by arrangements for holding a public meeting for inaugurating a District Missionary Society. The meeting was convened for two o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday, the sixth of October, 1813. James Buckley and Richard Watson preached preparatory sermons. This plan was quite new in Methodism. Watson had but recently returned to the Connexion, and he naturally thought that, under these circumstances, his taking a prominent part in the introductory services would lay him open to the imputation of introducing injurious novelties. His objections, however, were overruled, and he submitted, though reluctantly, to the judgment of his brethren. Buckley preached on the Tuesday evening at Armley, and Watson on the Wednesday morning at Albion Street, Leeds. This sermon, a remarkable specimen of pulpit

oratory, produced a great impression. The text was, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." (Ezek. xxxvii. 9.) The preacher gave a just and striking view of the state of the heathen, the power of the Gospel, and the obligation which rests upon the church to make provision for its universal publication. The discourse was afterward printed, and its extensive circulation was made a great blessing to the cause of Missions.

The meeting was, however, the great feature of the movement. When the appointed hour arrived, almost every one shrunk from the serious responsibility. Here, as in the preliminary arrangements, the judgment, decision, and energy of Jabez Bunting cleared away every difficulty. After the devotional exercises, Thomas Thompson, M.P., of Hull, was called to preside. He delivered a brief address, referring to the missionary operations of the Methodist Connexion and of other religious bodies, and urged on the congregation becoming seriousness of feeling and demeanour during the meeting. The first resolution was moved by the venerable James Wood, and seconded by William Warrener, many years a missionary in the West Indies, but then labouring in Selby. The second resolution was moved by Charles Atmore; the third, by George Morley; the fourth, by W. G. Scarth, of Leeds; the fifth, by John Braithwaite; the sixth, by John Wood, of Wakefield; the seventh, by William Dawson. Thomas Vasey moved the tenth resolution; James Buckley the twelfth; and Jabez Bunting the sixteenth. We have only mentioned the names of those speakers whose able addresses on this most interesting occasion have been preserved for our perusal by the ability and kind care of a gentleman who was present. Our limits forbid our

attempting to give even an outline of them; but they richly deserve the attention of all Methodists and lovers of Missions.*

In the course of the meeting the Rev. Mr. Eccles, minister of the Independent congregation at Whitechapel, and one of the secretaries to the West Riding Missionary Society, a branch of that which is now denominated "the London Missionary," stated that he attended for the purpose of testifying the good wishes of himself and his friends toward the Society then being instituted by the Methodists. Those members of the Methodist Connexion who had promised subscriptions to the former Society, would now, of course, support the latter, as one which belonged peculiarly to their own Body. The missionary cause was but one cause; and the various Societies, though, like ships in harbour, they might seem to crowd each other, would have room enough when they put out to sea. He wished that all Christians should consider themselves as one body in this great work.

Toward the close of the meeting, Mr. Eccles again rose, and a second time urged on the meeting the duty of separation under the impression that the missionary cause is but ONE, and that in which all denominations of Christians are united. Mr. Bunting, believing that such statements might lead uninformed persons into misconception, set the whole case luminously before the congregation by the following brief address:—

Clear exposition of the case by Mr. Bunting.

"Mr. Chairman, I agree with Mr. Eccles that the missionary cause ought to be regarded as strictly and eminently ONE. It is ONE in its grand object, as it aims at

* "A Report of the principal Speeches delivered at the Formation of the Methodist Missionary Society for the Leeds District, October 6th, 1813. By JAMES NICHOLS." Fifth Edition. Simpkin and Marshall; Mason.

promoting the glory of God, and the universal spread and influence of truth. It is one, also, as it unites the affections and good wishes of all genuine Christians, however different may be the external forms which it assumes, or the external agency by which it is carried on. For myself and for the friends who surround me, I can assure Mr. Eccles, that we most cordially and fervently desire the success of all missionary institutions, among every denomination of Christians; and I hope those who have it in their power will not be backward to contribute to them all. At the same time, I must be allowed to remind the meeting that there is no common fund in existence, out of which all missionary establishments may claim and receive pecuniary assistance. The cause is ONE; but it is promoted by *several* distinct Societies, each of which has its *distinct* and *separate fund.* An impression of a contrary kind has, I know, prevailed in some quarters; and, though I am sure Mr. Eccles did not design to confirm that impression, I felt it necessary to state the matter in its true light, in order that the present exertions of the Methodists in this vicinity, on behalf of their own particular department of the great missionary service, may appear to be, as they really are, imperiously required. Mr. Eccles has very properly compared the different Missionary Societies to ships, which, though sometimes crowded while in harbour together, will all find room enough when they go forth into the broad sea. Now, Sir, all I mean to say is, that the Methodist missionary ship is one, among others, of the grand fleet by which it is intended to carry to the ends of the earth the blessings of the Gospel; that this ship, like the rest, must be manned, freighted, and provisioned for the voyage; and that our most strenuous efforts, and those of our friends, are necessary to fit it for the sea, and to

prepare it for the service on which it is destined to proceed. Other denominations are particularly concerned for their own respective ships; and we must particularly care for ours. But our sincere and ardent prayer is, that God may send them *all* a safe and prosperous voyage!" *

At the request of the general meeting, "An Address to the Public" was prepared by Mr. Watson, in which the extent and importance of the Methodist Missions were briefly stated. It was shown that, besides about forty ministers labouring in the most destitute parts of England and Wales in a purely missionary character, the Connexion had about sixty missionaries amongst the Papists of Ireland, and in various foreign lands; and the claims of these efforts on the liberality of British Christians were ably and energetically enforced. Many thousands of this "Address" were circulated. The financial result was the remittance from the District of one thousand pounds to the treasurer in less than twelve months.

Happy results of this movement.

The example nobly set by the Leeds District was speedily followed. Before the ensuing Conference, similar Meetings were held, and Societies organized, in the Halifax, York, Sheffield, Cornwall, and Newcastle Districts. The Connexion, indeed, appeared to awake and rise up, in a great measure at least, to a just consideration of the weighty responsibility which the wretchedness and danger of the heathen world laid on those who richly enjoy every New Covenant blessing. A new era in Methodism was inaugurated, a prelude of such progress in the civilization and religion of mankind, as perhaps the world had never seen before,—certainly never since the apostolic age.

This year will also be memorable in Methodist history for one of the most remarkable and extensive revivals of

* Mr. Nichols's "Report," p. 40. Fifth Edition.

religion ever known in this or any other country. It took place in the west of Cornwall, and extended more or less over the whole of the peninsula below Truro.

The great revival in Cornwall.

This extraordinary work of grace was commenced at Redruth. All the meetings for worship had been well attended for some time. More than usual seriousness was perceptible among the people, and their religious assemblies were characterized by great solemnity. But on Sunday, February 13th, 1814, just before the close of a Society meeting after the evening preaching at Redruth, Mr. Haime, the minister, mentioned some instances of visible good in several parts of the Circuit. Whilst doing so, one young woman, who had been several weeks in great sorrow for her sin and danger, cried aloud for mercy. Prayers were offered on her behalf; and, before the meeting closed, she was delivered from her burden of guilt, and found peace with God. Another young woman was also in deep distress; but she went away without receiving comfort. The following morning, Mr. Truscott, the superintendent preacher, visited her: while he was praying, the Lord spoke peace to her soul, and she rejoiced in God. The Thursday after, at a prayer-meeting held in a dwelling-house, eight persons obtained a sense of the divine favour; and the next evening, at a prayer-meeting in the workhouse, many were in deep distress, and some experienced much divine consolation. Sunday, the twentieth, a gracious influence was very generally prevalent in Redruth. About forty members were added to the Classes, and six or eight of them found deliverance from the guilt of sin. No sooner had Mr. Morris finished the afternoon sermon, than "multitudes began to cry earnestly for mercy," and continued until the evening service. Many found peace with God, and mingled songs of praise with

the agonizing cries of the mourners. In the evening Mr. Morris was able to deliver his sermon, but the people were so wrought upon, that an entire suppression of their feelings was impossible. And after preaching, they lifted up their voices in prayer and praise in a most extraordinary manner; and could not be prevailed on to separate, until after one o'clock on Monday morning.

Preaching began at seven o'clock (the usual hour) on Monday evening. During the service many persons were so deeply affected that they could not wholly suppress their feelings. After the sermon, the congregation remained in earnest prayer. Great numbers were in agony; and several found peace and joy in believing. It was two o'clock on the following morning before the congregation could be induced to leave the chapel. These remarkable scenes produced a deep impression on all the neighbourhood. The author has now at his side a pious miner who had been a member of Society some years before this occurrence, and has continued so ever since. He distinctly remembers that, while engaged one day that week in the depths of a Camborne mine, the manager, in the usual course of his inspection, asked a miner from Redruth, what this strange work was. The man said, the general impression in the neighbourhood was, that it was a great work of God; and that many thought it preparatory to the end of the world.

Tuesday, February twenty-second, the power of God so affected great numbers, that they spontaneously crowded to the chapel before noon, to seek relief in earnest prayer. This continued throughout the day, and the whole of the following night. Many obtained deliverance from the burden of their guilt; and many others were so convinced of their spiritual danger, that the number of penitents

in deep distress rather increased than diminished. The chapel could not be cleared until four o'clock on the following morning.

Its remarkable progress.

On Wednesday, at noon, the superintendent met those recommended by leaders for admission into Society. The time was unfavourable for a large attendance, but more than eighty presented themselves, and were directed to Classes. They all appeared greatly concerned for salvation: many, after having suffered deep distress, had been brought into the experience of Divine consolation. With those who received notes of admission, many came who were seeking pardoning mercy: and were followed by others in a similar state of mind. This constant succession of penitents continued in such numbers, that the chapel could not be cleared until nine o'clock on the next morning; and this was only for a very short interval. Before twelve o'clock that day, the crowd again gathered in the chapel, and continued the whole night and the next day; and in the evening was greater than it had ever been before. The agonizing cries of so many persons for the forgiveness of sins filled the house. They were directed to the great atonement, and taught to believe on Christ; but this generally appeared to have little effect. The mourning ones, absorbed in the weight of woe and sense of the divine wrath which rested on them, cried mightily to God, until, under the teaching of His Spirit, they were enabled to believe to the saving of their souls. The chapel continued occupied the whole night. Several respectable and educated young men were among the mourners, who returned to their homes in the morning happy in God. All the early part of Saturday the superintendent was again occupied in giving notes of admission, and in appointing the converts to Classes.

By this time the work had spread to other places. A young man, the eldest son of a respectable Methodist family in Tuckingmill, had been at Redruth, the whole of Friday night, and returned home, full of Divine peace and love, on the Saturday morning. He arrived just in time for domestic worship, and his presence produced deep feeling in the family, as they joined in morning prayer. While the pious father was conducting this service, one of the servants began to cry aloud. She was heard by some customers in the shop, who begged to be allowed to join the family devotions. Neighbours flocked in; and the worship was protracted for some hours, until at length increasing numbers compelled them to adjourn to the chapel, which was soon filled. The penitents became so numerous and were so earnest, that, when seven o'clock, the usual hour for service, arrived, the preacher could not be heard; all idea of preaching was given up; and Mr. Truscott went among those in distress, endeavouring to direct them to Jesus.

The Sunday following, this great and marvellous work of God became general in the immediate neighbourhood. At Camborne, Troon, and other contiguous chapels, the people thronged together, under deep religious feeling, intent on obtaining their salvation. Thence it extended east, west, and south, until, in a greater or lesser degree, throughout the whole peninsula from Truro, nearly forty miles, and from the Lizard to the north coast, every parish was visited. In some parts the influence was more general and abiding than in others; but it seemed as if a mighty and prevalent breeze of saving grace swept over the whole district. The chapels in some places were occupied night and day for a week; in others, for two, three, or four weeks. In the towns, although the salutary impression was very great, it

was less marked than in some of the rural parishes. In the most favoured of these there were not more than from ten to twenty who were not brought under this gracious influence. During the progress of this blessed work, although the chapels were generally sought as the most eligible places of resort by those convinced of sin, the work was not exclusively confined to the sanctuaries. The deepest recesses of the mines echoed with sounds of agonizing prayer and songs of praise. In those gloomy excavations the pious gathered around their penitent comrades, until their mourning was turned into joy. The houses for dressing the ores, and preparing them for the market, were often similarly employed. In these places prayer-meetings were frequently held with the most blessed results, and numerous conversions attested the presence and power of God.

Its sterling character and blessed results.

It is difficult to speak of the nature of this work in general terms. That among such numbers there were some only partially affected, and whose real religious improvement was very superficial, cannot be doubted. But it was the unanimous opinion of those who fairly observed its progress, whether Methodists or otherwise, that this was a great work of God. Throughout the mining district of Redruth and Camborne, where it was most influential, not a whisper was heard expressing a contrary judgment. Deep seriousness sat on every countenance; and those who never professed to be brought under religious influence, seemed, by their altered and grave demeanour, awe-stricken in the presence of God.

Nor must it be supposed that those who professed to find pardon generally deluded themselves, or were persuaded to adopt a groundless opinion. The convictions of sin, guilt, and danger, were intensely deep. Many wrestled with God for eight, ten, twelve, and

even sixteen consecutive hours on their knees, before they found the comfort they desired. During the early part of this revival, a fine strong miner, having a thick woollen jacket on his arm, such as miners wear when engaged at the surface of the mine in the depth of winter, was met by a local preacher, who asked him where he was going. "I am going," replied the man, "over to Troon chapel. I have been there twice before, for some hours, praying to God to pardon my sins; but I have found no relief yet; but I am determined now to find mercy before I return." "But," said the preacher, "if you are going to chapel, what are you about to do with your flannel jacket?" "Why," said the man, "kneeling upon the hard floor so many hours makes one very sore; and, as I am determined to find mercy this time, I take my jacket to kneel on." Men who could seek God with such steady earnestness and determination, must have been deeply convinced that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

It was not to be expected, however, that such an extensive work could begin and end without opposition. This revival was assailed by two antagonists from very different quarters. The Rev. C. Val. Le Grice, a clergyman of Penzance, preached a sermon in the episcopal chapel of that town, which was almost immediately afterward published in London. It was entitled, "Proofs of the Spirit: or, Considerations on Revivalism." The revival was denounced and ridiculed as a wicked contrivance,—a delusion,—calculated greatly to damage the cause of true religion. Richard Treffry, Sen., replied to this publication in a letter to the reverend author, in which his allegations were triumphantly refuted. The doctrines asserted in the sermon were proved to be groundless; and the extraordi-

It is opposed, but successfully defended.

nary work of grace vindicated as thoroughly reasonable and religious. Mr. Le Grice made no reply; indeed, the masculine vigour of Treffry, and the irresistible force of his arguments, put this out of the question. But an anonymous writer, endeavouring to support the cause which the clergyman had espoused, came to his aid with "An Essay on Enthusiasm." This effort was vain. Left to itself, it could have produced little effect; but it was completely demolished by a withering and caustic reply from the pen of Francis Truscott.

The other antagonist of the revival was James Cornish, a young surgeon at Falmouth. He sent a letter to the "Medical Review," in which he exhibited this extraordinary movement as an epidemic disease, brought on by the alarming sermons addressed to the people. This writer asserted that it only affected minds of the lowest order. In endeavouring to maintain these unfounded assumptions, he found no vestige of support in science, reason, or fact. Indeed, in this feeble attempt to produce something witty and clever, he only brought forth a weak parody,—a ridiculous caricature, treating a very serious subject with a levity bordering on profaneness. In a letter to the "Methodist Magazine,"* Truscott showed the true character of this unworthy effort.

The undoubted moral and religious effects of this revival.

The moral and religious results of this work were its best vindication, its enemies themselves being judges. Drunkards became temperate, rogues honest, profane persons devout: indeed, the public character of some neighbourhoods was quite changed, the inhabitants having learned to fear God and work righteousness. At the Conference of 1813 the number of members in the Circuits more or less affected by this revival, namely, Redruth,

* "Methodist Magazine," 1814, pp. 547–551.

Truro, St. Austell, Bodmin, Penzance, and Helston, was nine thousand four hundred and five. In the following year the return gave fourteen thousand six hundred and sixteen, a net increase of about five thousand two hundred members gathered from February to June, and judged sufficiently established in piety to be recognised as members of a Christian church. But there is every reason to believe that this is a very inadequate estimate of the number of persons brought under religious influence at this time. The number of members in these Circuits at the following Conference was fourteen thousand two hundred and ninety-six, a decrease of little more than three hundred. As most of the persons within reach of Methodist influence in this District were by this revival brought into connexion with the Society, few further additions could be made in the next two or three years; and the decrease above-named is little more than half the number of members that might be expected to die in twelve months; so that, if we rely fully on these figures, we might suppose there were no backsliders. There must, therefore, have been a reserve—and, probably, a considerable one—of persons not judged sufficiently established to be received as full members of Society, and who were reckoned as only on trial for membership. A reasonable allowance having been made for these, it will be seen that a very great number indeed were brought under the influence of spiritual religion. Marvellous in its extent, depth, and swiftness, was this wonderful work of grace.

The Conference of 1814.

Two hundred and eighty preachers assembled at the Bristol Conference of 1814; and "such was the eagerness manifested to entertain them," that many who desired ministerial guests were disappointed. Adam Clarke was a

second time elected president, and Jabez Bunting secretary. There was an increase of five Circuits * and nearly fifteen thousand members. Nine ministers, for various causes, ceased to travel; thirty-four were received on trial,—among whom were John Hannah, who has long been one of our theological professors, and James Methley, who has just closed a most useful career by a calm and happy death;—and seven were summoned to their rest. The early life of MATTHIAS JOYCE, hardened and cruel in the extreme, forms a most romantic and affecting chapter in the "Lives of Early Methodist Preachers." Although a bigoted Papist, he went to hear Wesley preach, became thoughtfully awakened, and, after deep and long penitence, obtained mercy. His thirty years' ministry in Ireland was most successful, and he left a memory precious to all who knew him.—JOHN PRITCHARD, a native of Meath, entered the itinerant ranks in 1771, became governor of Kingswood school in 1802, and entered into rest at the good age of seventy-one.—WILLIAM PEACOCK laboured nine years with great faithfulness and zeal, chiefly as an Irish missionary. In fairs, fields, and markets he preached to excited or attentive crowds. A mob broke into the house where he slept, and demanded the preacher. He escaped by the back door almost naked, lay on the damp grass for several hours, and ever after suffered from dreadful spasms, which soon wasted his vigorous constitution, and hurried him to an early grave. —WILLIAM MAHY was a native of Guernsey, and the first

* The Scilly Isles, Cardiff (Welsh), Swansea (Welsh), Brecon (Welsh), Merthyr (Welsh), Carmarthen (Welsh), Lampeter, Ballyconnel, and Brampton ceased to be reckoned as Circuits; and Chelmsford, Newport Pagnell, Ampthill, Maidstone, Market Harborough, St. David's, Clitheroe, Dunfermline, Elgin, Killesandra, Haslingden, Glastonbury, Framlingham, and Kingswood were entered on the list, and numbered as Circuits.

Methodist preacher stationed in France, where he laboured eighteen years. Reason ultimately lost her ascendancy; but his last words were, "My dependence is on the merits of my Saviour, and the mercy of a good God does not forsake me."—WILLIAM STEVENS, a native of Devonport, was appointed to a Circuit in 1786, laboured in full work sixteen years, and then became "English master at Kingswood School." Not having strength for the arduous work of a Circuit, he kept a classical and commercial academy, and died in his fifty-first year.—THOMAS MASSEY, a young man of undoubted piety and "slender abilities," was early called to the ministry, and soon removed to heaven:—and JOHN MARTIN "travelled fourteen years with acceptance," and "died well."

Important changes introduced.

The first acts of the assembled preachers on this occasion exhibited a great departure from all previous usage in two most important particulars. Hitherto the president and secretary had been elected by the votes of the preachers who composed, what is generally called, "the Legal Hundred," or Conference. Now, however, it was agreed, before the election of those officers took place, that all the preachers who had been in the ministry fourteen years and upwards, should vote at this election; and, to cut off all doubt as to the legality of this action, the persons thus selected were referred to the "legal Hundred," who confirmed the election by their separate vote.

The other change respected the manner of filling up the vacancies, caused by death or retirement, in the legal Conference. This had previously been done according to seniority; the preachers longest in the ministry being taken in regular succession. It was now agreed that in every four vacancies, three should be supplied as heretofore: and the fourth, by the ballot of the Conference, without

regard to the length of time any candidate might have been in the ministry.

These simple alterations were a vast development of the Methodist economy. The number of preachers in the Connexion was, according to Crowther, eight hundred and forty-two. The members of "the legal Hundred" would, therefore, always be a small minority. Chosen, as they had been, by seniority, they would always represent the most mature judgment and feeling of the Methodist ministry, but certainly not its fullest intellectual vigour, practical energy, and zeal. By opening the door so as to admit one in every four without respect to age, a means was created for introducing every man of intellectual eminence into the Hundred, making that body, as far as possible, a representation of the age, excellence, and energy of the ministry. Allowing all the preachers who had travelled fourteen years to vote for the election of president and secretary, was a no less important and salutary change. The previous practice worked very well as it was left by Wesley. At his death the number of preachers in Great Britain was two hundred and ninety-one. The "legal Hundred" would, therefore, be little less than the senior half of the preachers in full Connexion. Now, however, when the whole number was trebled, the case was greatly altered. The members of "the Hundred" present at any Conference would be but a small and aged minority of the active working ministry; and, being separated so far from them in age, might not always—perhaps but seldom—select such men for the principal offices as would secure the confidence of the preachers generally. With the continued increase of the Connexion, this inconvenience would increase, until the evil, dreaded from the date of the Deed of Declaration, would really have come, and "the

Hundred" form a ruling aristocracy in the Methodist ministry. The measure now adopted averted this evil entirely. By giving preachers of fourteen years' standing a vote for the president and secretary, it made these officers the actual choice of the matured Methodist ministry; while, by the *election* of every fourth man into "the Hundred," the distinction between that body and their brethren, fast becoming invidious, was rendered one of increasing affection and respect.

Election of Mr. Bunting into "the Hundred," and to be secretary.

Jabez Bunting, although a preacher of only fifteen years' standing, had so commended himself to the attention and respect of his brethren by uncommon ability and zeal, that his position was immediately affected by both these changes. He was the first who, without regard to seniority, was selected by ballot and received into "the Hundred." Being now qualified for both the highest offices in the Connexion, he was at once elected to be secretary to the Conference. It is probable, that the evident desirableness of this step hastened the improved regulations. As sub-secretary he had displayed so much wisdom and aptitude for business, that the importance of his being placed in a prominent and influential position was too generally apparent to be obstructed by any mere routine usage. A plan was accordingly devised which not only met this individual case, but also introduced a great improvement in the general working of the Methodist system.

The transactions of the Conference.

Mr. Walter Griffith, the ex-president, was appointed to preside over the ensuing Irish Conference. Public collections, or applications for private subscriptions within certain prescribed limits, were authorized to be made on behalf of one hundred and fourteen needy chapel trusts.

Several of the Districts having followed the example of

Leeds, in forming Missionary Auxiliary Societies, the Conference strongly recommended that every District in the kingdom should pursue a similar course. The thanks of the Conference were voted to the preachers in the Leeds, Halifax, York, Sheffield, Cornwall, and Newcastle Districts, who had been concerned in the formation of the Missionary Societies; and to all the members and friends of these Societies for their liberal and zealous support. James Wood was appointed general treasurer, and Messrs. Edmondson and Buckley joint secretaries, to the General Missionary Society. It was also resolved to solicit annual subscriptions for the support of the Kingswood and Woodhouse Grove Schools; and committees were, as usual, appointed for the management of these educational establishments. It was resolved that a loyal address should be presented to the Prince Regent, expressing devoted attachment to the person and government of the sovereign, gratitude for religious privileges, and for the restoration of peace in Europe; and earnestly entreating his Royal Highness to use his utmost endeavours to prevent the threatened revival of the African Slave Trade.

Before this Conference was held, the vessels which carried Coke and his missionary companions from the shores of England, had safely reached India. Letters, announcing the melancholy fact that the Doctor died suddenly at sea, on the third of May, and his remains had been committed to the mighty deep, reached England in November. They were inserted in the December number of the "Methodist Magazine," and the whole Connexion was informed of the painful fact, and involved in deep and universal sorrow. And as all particulars connected with the great enterprise which Dr. Coke had organized,

his sudden and lamented death, and the future conduct and fortunes of his surviving companions, are important elements of Methodist history, we shall narrate them as fully as our limits will allow.

The voyage of the missionaries to India.

When the commodore received his final dispatches off Falmouth, on the second of January, and directed the course of the fleet towards the ocean, Coke was exceedingly delighted, as though he had now fairly entered on the great work to which he had devoted his life. The missionaries were embarked in two vessels,—the "Cabalva," Captain Birch; and the "Lady Melville," Captain Lochner. With six regular Indiamen and about twenty smaller sailing vessels, under convoy of three ships of war, they proceeded on their voyage. Coke had so often sailed from the shores of England, that he felt nothing but delight in the prospect of missionary success; but this was not the case with all his companions. Mr. Clough, a young man, leaving his home and friends for the first time, and, as it seemed to him, for ever, was deeply affected, especially when, between seven and eight o'clock in the evening, the Lizard light began to wax dim, through the increasing distance which intervened. With trembling emotion he asked the Doctor to go on deck, and take a last look at the light. He did so with evident pleasure, and immediately proposed a prayer-meeting,—his constant practice, on every occasion of special interest or concern, while on board.

In two days they entered the Bay of Biscay; and, for three weeks, they had very rough weather. On the tenth of February, whilst Coke and his companions were at breakfast, the "Lady Melville" hoisted her flag half-mast-high, the usual signal of a death on board. Mrs. Ault had been very delicate for some time; and her physician had declared that her only hope of recovery lay in

her removal to a very warm climate. The Doctor and his friends immediately conjectured that she had passed to her reward. She died "with a strong confidence in God, through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and a calm resignation to the divine will;" and, with due solemnity and Christian rites, her body was committed to the mighty deep.

On the twentieth of April the ships rounded the Cape in very stormy weather, which occasioned the loss of several men. On the twenty-third they passed the Isle of Bourbon; on the twenty-fourth, the Isle of France; and, by the twenty-seventh, were abreast of the little Isle of Gallega, bearing directly for the coast of India. During the whole of the voyage, Coke had so assiduously devoted himself to the acquirement of the languages and knowledge requisite to enable him to prosecute the Indian Mission with success, that his friends frequently feared that he would endanger his health. The ardour of his mind, and the intensity with which he gave himself to this work, may be gathered from the following extract from his journal written at sea: "I have a most charming study. It has two large windows that open from the stern to the sea, and my elbow chair and my table are placed in the most convenient situation possible. Here I employ almost all my time, and nearly the whole of it in reading and writing Portuguese, excepting my hours of meditation, which, indeed, I can hardly except; for my chief study is my Portuguese Bible. O, how sweet is the word of God! I have loved it since I came into the ship more than ever I did before.

Religious devotedness of Dr. Coke.

'Jesus gives me, in His word,
Food and medicine, shield and sword.'

I now feel, I think, more than ever the value of retirement,

silence, and tranquillity of soul; and can say of my God what Virgil did of his Augustus: '*Deus nobis hæc otia fecit:*' 'God Himself has favoured me with these leisure hours.' And yet I cannot repent of the thousands of hours which I have spent in the most vile, the most glorious drudgery of begging from house to house. The tens of thousands of pounds which I have raised for the Missions, and the beneficial effects thereof, form an ample compensation for all the time and labour. The whole was in God. But what would my heart have felt, if all the Missions already established had been left without support on my departure for England? But it was the work of God. He alone began it, and He alone increased it; and (if I may presume so to express myself with humble modesty) He has bound Himself to support it. He, therefore, before I sailed, said to the north, 'Bring forth;' and to the south, 'Keep not back.' The *west*, also, is coming forwards. The sister island has taken the flame; and the highly favoured *British Isles* conspire to spread our Missions throughout the world. How light it has made my heart! Next to union and communion with God, nothing could afford me such high satisfaction. I hasten to Asia with alacrity and joy. And yet I must confess that if the clouds had been ever so obscure, if all human aid had apparently been withdrawn from those Missions, the interests of which are so interwoven with the very strings of my heart, my Divine call to Asia has been so indubitably clear, that I should have been obliged to have thrown everything into the hands of my God, and to have said to Him, 'Here I am, send me' to Asia."

In this spirit Coke continued to study with such assiduity and success that, although sixty-seven years of age, he obtained such a knowledge of Portuguese as enabled

him to write several sermons and prayers in that language, as well as a metrical translation of about fifty Methodist hymns. But all this, according to the disposal of an inscrutable Providence, was to terminate in a manner the most unexpected and afflictive.

"The servant of the Lord, weighed down with the toils of the past, was more than willing to begin anew. But the Divine Master, accepting the will for the deed, was about to send His angels to carry him to the place where the just, made free from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity. While in the neighbourhood of the equator, Dr. Coke's health began to wear such signs of decline as to excite the apprehensions of his friends. Mr. Clough expressed his fears to the medical gentlemen of the ship, who concurred with him in the conviction that the Doctor's incessant application to study was undermining his constitution, and assured him that the same pursuits could not be carried on in that climate, at his time of life, without the most serious peril. Mr. Clough therefore joined both remonstrance and entreaty, and prevailed upon him to forego his books sometimes, and take an occasional relaxation. When anything occurred which would be likely to amuse him, as a shoal of flying-fish chased by a dolphin, the apparition of a whale, the catching of a shark, or the ship coming within hail of another, the affectionate Clough would hasten to the cabin, and bring him out, merely for the sake of the refreshment it would afford him. At sunset, too, according to his old habit, he would pace the quarter-deck, and gaze on the beauty of the western sky. But he seldom stayed long, and retired again to his writing-table, and thence to his bed, that he might rise with the sun to resume his labours. All this time nature, too severely tasked, was losing its vital energy.

"On the 1st of May, Mrs. Harvard, who, in taking the air on the quarter-deck, had met the Doctor, and walked with him some few minutes, remarked, on her return to the cabin of her sick husband, how concerned she was at the visible alteration in his countenance. In the evening, as usual, he looked in to visit and pray with them. He complained of what he called a little indisposition, and especially of feeling chill, which he attributed to his wearing fine linen shirts when damp from perspiration. Mrs. Harvard thereupon promised to provide him with some calico ones on their arrival at Bombay, and meanwhile pressed him to accept the use of some from the stock of Mr. Harvard. He acceded to the wish, and took a few with him to his own room. The next morning Mrs. Harvard, feeling uneasy about him, visited the Doctor. She found him sitting in a languid state in his elbow-chair, reclining his head on one of his hands. She expressed her regret to see him so indisposed; upon which, making an evident effort to assume a better appearance, he acknowledged that he had felt rather poorly, but believed it would soon pass away, and proposed a walk on deck. Here, however, his weakness became yet more visible, his wavering step and haggard looks betraying a most serious prostration.

"At nightfall he paid them the accustomed evening visit. On entering, he observed that Mrs. Harvard was looking more cheerful than of late; and said, 'Your countenance, sister Harvard, is a good barometer; I need not ask how brother Harvard is.'

"As he spoke, they saw in *his* countenance the sad prognostics of all that was the reverse of convalescence. 'He sat,' writes Mr. Harvard, 'for a short time in occasional conversation, but evidently in a state of great relaxation

and debility. I was lying on the sofa very weak, and imagined the Doctor experienced a momentary dejection. To give the conversation a cheerful tone, I observed to him how great an obligation he had conferred upon me in giving me so good a wife, and how considerably my recent affliction had been lessened by her affectionate offices. My attempt succeeded. His natural and amiable vivacity played again on his countenance. He then rose, as if to embrace the opportunity of parting from us with cheerfulness; and, taking us each by the hand, with a solemn but heavenly smile gave us his blessing. Thus closed our earthly intercourse.'

"The Doctor retired to his cabin, accompanied by Mr. Clough. Before lying down he requested to have some medicine brought from the chest, which he intended to take that night. This was done, and various arrangements were made by Mr. Clough for his comfort. The latter then requested to have permission to watch at his side all night; but the Doctor, thanking him, assured him it was not necessary, and expressed the hope of being better on the morrow. His voice was heard no more.

"It had been his habit throughout the voyage to rise at half-past five; and to insure the improvement of that early season for devotion and study, the servant who attended on him was always accustomed to call him at the appointed time.

His death. "At half-past five on the morning of the 3rd of May, the faithful attendant stood as usual at the cabin-door, and knocked. He listened in vain for the customary acknowledgment. At length, moving the latch, he noiselessly entered the room, and, petrified with surprise and awe, beheld the form of the venerable servant of God stretched lifeless on the floor.

"After recovering from the shock which this spectacle had given his bewildered feelings, the man hastened to communicate the discovery to Captain Birch, who, startled and perturbed by the intelligence, sent in the first place for Mr. Clough, and made him acquainted with what had come to pass. Mastering his own agitation, Mr. Clough proceeded to break the news to his colleague. Mr. Harvard, but slowly recovering from a fever, was in so debilitated a state as to render his friend the more anxious about the effect it would have upon him. 'He endeavoured,' writes Mr. Harvard, 'to draw me out of my cabin, but in vain. I was too much the invalid to be moved at so early an hour without some very powerful cause. When he failed in this, he came and sat by my bedside. My wife was employed at the other end of our apartment. Immediately on his entrance she inquired if he had seen the Doctor,—a question which he evaded: but on her observing, she thought some one should go in and see him, as he was so poorly the night before, Mr. Clough wrote the following words with a pencil on a slip of paper, and held it before my eyes:—"Dr. Coke is dead!"

"'I looked at him with amazement. "O, no," said I; "it cannot be. Do not work on my feelings with a subject so serious." In the midst of our mutual agitation Mrs. Harvard renewed her inquiries, and declared she would go herself and see him. With this intention she laid her hand on the door communicating with the Doctor's cabin, when Mr. Clough earnestly begged her to desist; adding, "It is of no service for you to go in: the Doctor is not in a fit state for you to see him.....I must tell you plainly, Dr. Coke is dead!"

"'Trembling from weakness and anxiety, I rose from my bed, and, having been assisted to dress by Mr. Clough,

walked to the Doctor's cabin leaning on his arm. There, alas! I found the lifeless body of our beloved friend laid on the bed. It appeared but little discomposed. A placid smile rested on his countenance; the head was turned a little on one side, while the stain from a stream of blood which had flowed from his mouth remained on his right cheek. O, what did I feel, while gazing on that sight! A crowd of thoughts rushed upon me like a rolling torrent. On the one hand, I viewed our friend and leader suddenly called away from us; on the other, our own situation as missionaries rendered the most responsible and painful. I was, notwithstanding, blessed with a rising confidence in God, and could breathe out, in the midst of our trial, "Thy will be done."

"'Wishing to know the immediate cause of our afflictive bereavement, I requested the surgeon of the ship to give us his opinion. Upon examining the body, he considered death to have been occasioned by apoplexy. It was supposed that he must have risen in the night, either to call some of us or to reach something, and that he fell in the position in which he was found. His death took place, doubtless, before midnight, as the body, when discovered, was quite cold and stiff. The easy dismissal with which he was evidently favoured afforded us some consolation, since neither Captain Birch nor myself heard any struggling or noise, which we must certainly have done, had there been any, as our cabins adjoined his, divided only from it by a very thin wainscot.

"'Captain Birch, kindly sympathizing with us in our affliction, had, unsolicited by us, had a boat prepared to carry the information to the "Melville," and to bring the other members of our mission on board the "Cabalva." I wrote a note to them, to prepare their minds; and so con-

siderate was the captain, that though the usual time for making the signal of a decease to the fleet is nine o'clock, yet, unwilling to have their minds agitated before they had been previously prepared by my letter, he delayed the signal till they had arrived on board. The fleet was then telegraphed that the Reverend Doctor Coke had departed this life.'

"One of the missionaries in the 'Melville,' adverting to the reception of Mr. Harvard's note, says, 'When it was read, all were as though thunderstruck: seized with a kind of stupor, the brethren felt that they could scarcely believe what they read. While thus exercised, sometimes gazing at the note, and then at each other, the surgeon of the "Melville" entered their cabin with a letter from Mr. Birch to Captain Lockner, stating the melancholy fact. All their fears were now realized, and they hastened to their brethren on board the "Cabalva."'

"I will give the rest in Mr. Harvard's own narrative. 'Our interview was solemn and affecting. We felt as children chastened in the presence of our heavenly Father. None knew how to speak the first, or, when he spoke, what to say. We were sensible of our peculiar situation, and could only exclaim, "How unsearchable are Thy judgments, O Lord!"

"'All personal considerations, however, were for the time swallowed up in a vortex of grief for the fate of their departed friend; but from this they felt they should rise to the consideration of the imminent duty they owed to the venerable dead. Their first wish respecting his remains was, that suitable measures should be adopted for their transmission to England for interment in the tomb of his family at Brecon. They not only considered that this would be proper in itself, but they had learned that the Doctor

himself had cherished a wish that, if he died away from England, such a plan might, if possible, be adopted. After consultation with one another, they resolved to seek the advice and concurrence of Captain Birch; and Messrs. Ault and Clough went to him for that purpose. They stated it to him, not only as their own desire, but also as the frequently expressed wish of the deceased. The captain, with much serious feeling, explained to them, that though he himself should be equally desirous with them that such an arrangement might be effected, yet, as they were on an outward instead of a homeward voyage, in a sultry climate, within two degrees of the equator, and a crowded ship, he felt it a duty to do violence to his inclinations, in begging them to forego their own, and consent to the usual mode of the burial of the dead at sea.*

"'The missionaries could say nothing to these arguments; and, however reluctant, were constrained to admit their validity, and, on further deliberation, to intimate to Captain Birch that they were obliged to resign themselves to the necessity of the occasion. He hereupon desired them to adopt their own mode with respect to the solemnity of the funeral; and requested them, in a note, to let him know

* "This decision, which appears to have been very necessary, excited nevertheless much regret in England, not only among the friends of Dr. Coke in the Methodist communion, but among many others, and some of them in the highest ranks of society, who had learned to respect and love him. As an instance, I may mention what a lady, the daughter of Mr. Bruce, an intimate friend of Dr. Coke, has communicated to me: namely, that, shortly after the news of the Doctor's decease reached England, the ex-chancellor Lord Erskine called on her father, to learn all the particulars; and, when told of the funeral at sea, expressed his opinion, with great warmth of manner, that 'it was a shame that so good and great a man should have been consigned to the ocean;' adding, that, 'though not a rich man,' he himself 'would not have minded two or three hundred pounds,' could he have been the means of sparing the body from such a fate."

how they intended it to be conducted, as "all on board wished to show every respect to the memory of so excellent a man."

"The arrangements in these cases are, of necessity, too simple to need a long description. A massive deal coffin was constructed by the ship's carpenter, with perforations which would facilitate the admission of water, and the exclusion of air, to prevent it from floating on the waves, and to insure the descent of the coffin to the deep bottom of its vast liquid tomb; while two cannon-balls enclosed in bags were laid at the head and two more at the feet of the corpse, to make this result the more certain. These dismal preparations having been completed, the coffin, about five in the afternoon, was slowly borne up to the leeward gangway, and lay covered over with signal-flags. An awning had been spread, as on Sabbath-day at worship-time. The soldiers were now drawn up in rank on deck; at the tolling of the ship's bell the crew gathered in silence; and the passengers, truly affected, assembled round the bier of their lamented companion. The office for the dead at sea was then commenced by Mr. Harvard, and at the proper moment all that was mortal of this dearly beloved servant of God was consigned to the depths.*

"Never were the words of the Voice that was heard from heaven more worthily echoed than then: 'Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.'"†

The death of Coke must always be regarded as a memorable event in the history of Methodism. No man had died in the Connexion, since the death of Wesley, who

* "Latitude 2° 29′ south; longitude 59° 29′ east."

† ETHERIDGE'S "Life of Dr. Coke," pp. 409–416.

had exercised such an extensive influence over the whole Methodist family. With a deep concern for the progress of the community, and the extension of its evangelical usefulness, he clearly perceived the defective and anomalous position of its ministers, and perseveringly struggled to provide a remedy, and to place the Connexion in a sound, effective, and healthy ecclesiastical position. He was not possessed of the requisite genius and intellectual power for the successful attainment of this great object. He did, however, what perhaps, for the interests of true religion, was an equally important work. He organized and extended the Methodism of America; fostered, defended, and promoted the Missions to British America and the West Indies; gave a mighty impulse to the promulgation of the Gospel in the most destitute parts of England, Ireland, and Wales; laboured to introduce an evangelical agency into France and Gibraltar; and, finally, inaugurated a great and effective missionary aggression on Asia. Besides all this, he paid constant attention to the general interests of the Connexion, and the religious condition of the world; and laboured in season and out of season, to promote the cause of the Saviour and the extension of His kingdom.

Embarrassment of the missionaries.

Their head being removed, the missionaries were left in a state of great perplexity as to their future action. So little had Dr. Coke contemplated the probability of his sudden departure, that he had not made them acquainted with the course he intended to pursue on landing. This difficulty was increased by their separation; for the missionary passengers on board the two vessels had no further opportunity of consulting together, from the time of Dr. Coke's funeral, until their arrival at Bombay about three weeks afterward.

Some of the passengers looked on the missionaries deprived of their leader with pity, and others with feelings nearly akin to contempt. One gay gentleman earnestly advised them, on reaching Bombay, to state their case to the government, and beg a free passage to England. They told him they could not do that, as they were determined to attempt the conversion of the natives of India. He laughed them to scorn, and declared the thing impossible. They replied, "What is impossible with man is possible with God, and our trust is in God." "O," said he, "if you take God into the account, I have nothing to say." On landing at Bombay they repaired to an hotel, where, having examined Dr. Coke's papers, they found nothing which warranted them to act as his executors, or draw money in his name, or on account of the Missionary Society. And they had so fully confided in his fatherly care, that all the money they collectively possessed would scarcely obtain a day's provision. In these painful circumstances they sought refuge in prayer, and earnestly pleaded the promises which God had made to His people. They were, however, soon relieved. They drew up a plain statement of their case, and presented it to Captain Birch, who had evinced the greatest kindness towards them, especially since the decease of Dr. Coke. That gentleman interested himself in their favour, and introduced them to Mr. Money, a banker of the city, to whom, as it providentially happened, Dr. Coke had obtained a letter of recommendation from a friend before he left England. This letter Mr. Harvard presented to Mr. Money, who immediately offered to advance whatever money they required, on the credit of the Society at home, and assured them that, but for his delicate health, he would himself have accompanied them to wait on the governor.

They are relieved by the kindness of Mr. Money.

This service, however, was rendered by Captain Birch. After all their varied vicissitudes and trials, the missionaries found the way open before them to enter on their work.

The effect produced by this intelligence in England.

The intelligence of Coke's death produced a sensation throughout the Methodist Connexion bordering on alarm. The whole community had strained itself for a great religious aggression on Asia, under his personal direction. We say great; for, although few men were sent, the enterprise was truly a great one, considering the pecuniary resources of Methodism. When, therefore, the originator of the movement—he to whom its entire management had been confided—was removed, almost every heart feared, and every cheek waxed pale. But this disaster was the means of rousing the Methodist Connexion to unwonted exertion in this field of evangelical toil. The brightest and best of its ministers consecrated their talents to this holy cause. In December, 1814, the first Missionary Meeting for the London District, numerously and respectably attended, was held in City Road chapel. Dr. Clarke was called to the chair, and exhibited, in historical detail, the various information attainable respecting the introduction of the Gospel into the British Islands; and, although this subject has been very largely investigated by the most eminent scholars during the forty years since elapsed, that address must still be considered a sound and valuable digest of nearly all that is known on the subject. Ministers, old and young, at home and from abroad, contributed their talents to impress on that great meeting the Christian duty and importance of sending the Gospel to the heathen. Wood, Benson, Entwisle, Jenkins, Bradburn, Gaulter, Edmondson, Sutcliffe, Buckley, M'Donald, Joshua Marsden from British America and Bermuda, Joseph Taylor from the

West Indies, with several talented and influential laymen, addressed the assembly.

Similar meetings had been held in Manchester, Wakefield, Newcastle, and other important towns; and the remaining Districts rapidly followed the example, until the whole Connexion was pervaded by a missionary spirit, and organized into missionary associations. This, however, was a work demanding not only the greatest activity, energy, and zeal, but profound wisdom, foresight, and judgment. That his great ability might more effectively aid this missionary movement, Jabez Bunting was removed from Leeds to London. Before leaving the former town, he had concerted with a friend some desirable and advantageous literary projects. But, located in the metropolis as secretary of the Conference, and seeing the claims of this great Mission work rising around him in every direction, there came over his mind serious doubt and concern, leading to anxious religious inquiry, and issuing in an irreversible judgment. He wrote to the friend who was a party to his literary projects: "The die is cast. If I give to our Missions the attention they require, I shall not have any time hereafter for literature." There are men who will pass by the record of such a fact without notice or concern. Yet who can tell how much is really involved in this single decision? Who can tell what that gifted and energetic mind would have produced, had it been devoted to literary pursuits? Who can tell what amount of fame and fortune was voluntarily relinquished, when Jabez Bunting determined to be known to posterity as the author only of a few sermons, that he might devote his best energies to the great work of sending the Gospel to the heathen? We can form no idea of the personal and family sacrifice then made; but we can form some conception of the importance of the consecrated

Mr. Bunting's devotion to the cause of Missions.

Its importance.

gift thus placed on the altar of God, as we trace the rapid, steady, and religious progress of the Missionary Societies.

Death of Lady Mary Fitzgerald.

During this year one of the few from the highest ranks of society who have derived benefit and blessing from Methodism, was removed from a course of earthly honour to a throne of heavenly glory. Lady Mary Fitzgerald was the daughter of John Lord Hervey, and grand-daughter of John Earl of Bristol. Moving in the first circles of society, and for some time an attendant at Court, as lady of the bed-chamber to the Princess Amelia Sophia, she discovered the utter insufficiency of earthly things to afford happiness to the soul. When about forty years of age, she was led to seek substantial peace in the knowledge of Christ. Having realized the pardoning mercy of God, she became a member of the Methodist Society, and took her share of "the reproach of Christ." A candid and pious clergyman, who gave some account of this excellent lady in preaching her funeral sermon, says: "She joined herself to the company of the most excellent Christians of whom she could hear, and became a companion of 'all them that fear God and keep His righteous judgments.' She 'walked in newness of life,' from 'newness of spirit:' and while the superficial might suppose that to one of her previous character but little change was necessary, 'old things indeed passed away, all things became new!" A new creed, a new circle of acquaintance, and attendance on places of worship of a new description, constituted but a very small part of the outward change. The employment of her whole time and wealth, her conduct and converse, in all the relations of life, and towards persons of all ranks and characters, was totally altered. As far as her attendance upon a princess would permit, (and this was only for a time, and occasionally,) everything splendid or expensive was wholly

renounced. All the pomp and decorations attached to her rank were given up. A style of plainness and simplicity was adopted in all particulars far beyond what is usual among inferior professors of the same holy truths, and, indeed, even more than in most instances would be desirable; but her entire consistency of conduct prevented all possibility of misconception."* "I have known this lady," says another writer, "for above twenty years, and never saw her superior in humility, charity, and entire devotedness to God. Her piety was a living principle always in action, extending its influence to the most minute ramifications of duty."

This excellent lady continued a member of the Methodist Society to the end of her life, and died in holy triumph when nearly ninety years old. In conformity with a clause in her will, she was interred in the City Road burial-ground, and a marble tablet was erected to her memory in the south-east corner of the chapel by her grandson, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas George Fitzgerald.

And of Mr Michael Longridge.

This year also removed Michael Longridge, of Sunderland, to the church triumphant. He was converted to God and joined the Methodist Society in early life. When twenty-two years of age, he became a leader and local preacher. Possessing deep piety and more than ordinary energy of mind, he felt a deep interest in everything relating to the state and progress of the Connexion. He took an active part in the discussions which preceded the settlement of 1797. And when Kilham commenced his course of agitation, he and Longridge had some correspondence; but if the former hoped to secure the latter as a follower, he was mistaken. Mr. Longridge remained firmly attached to Methodism to the end of his life.

* "Methodist Magazine," 1815, p. 525.

Although not inattentive to his other duties, Longridge devoted his principal attention to the religious culture of the young. "His whole soul entered into the business of the rising generation. For that he thought; for that he wrote; for that he laboured with every power of body and soul; and there are thousands of the children in this town (Sunderland) and county who already call him blessed; many of whom, I doubt not, will meet him in glory. The example which he set stimulated others to exertion. To him they applied for direction and advice; and, if at any time they were ready to faint in their work, from him they were always sure to meet with encouragement."* He died full of faith and love, April 17th, 1815, in his forty-eighth year.

Nor was the aggressive power of the Gospel in awakening and converting hardened and depraved sinners absent from Methodism. While its aged saints were passing away to their glorious reward, unconverted men were being translated from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son. John Riddle, a native of the north of Ireland, learned the hosiery business, went to the West Indies as a sailor, afterward learned the trade of a shipwright, and was a notoriously wicked man. In the last lovefeast he attended, he "acknowledged that he had been a *cock-fighter*, a *Sabbath-breaker*, a *profane swearer*, a *drunkard*, &c.; that when inflamed by spirituous liquors, enraged with anger, or stung with remorse, he was the dread and tyrant of his family, and would often wreak his vengeance in the destruction of his household furniture."

Conversion of John Riddle.

We notice this case particularly, because this hardened transgressor was not brought to a sense of sin and danger under any special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, or the

* Mr. George Marsden, in "Methodist Magazine," 1815, p. 567.

preaching of the Gospel, but by the persevering pious reproof and advice of a goodly fellow-labourer. This man was a Methodist, and frequently rebuked the profaneness of his companion with Christian firmness, meekness, and love. Riddle, many years proof against all counsel, at length acknowledged that he felt the force of the word so powerfully, that "his blood ran chill to the end of his toes." He was persuaded to attend a prayer-meeting, where his contrition was so great that he watered the floor with his tears. Soon afterward he "cast his guilty soul upon the all-sufficient atonement and righteousness of Christ; and, in consequence, was filled with joy and peace in believing."

After his conversion he became as devoted and zealous in the service of God, as he had formerly been in the ways of sin. All who knew him were constrained to acknowledge the mighty change grace had wrought in his heart. Having a large family, the scarcity of labour and the fluctuation of wages sometimes subjected him to severe privation. But all was endured with Christian fortitude and resignation. After excessive toil, he would return to his home, and partake of the meanest and most stinted fare, with gratitude of heart to the Lord.*

Methodist soldiers at Waterloo

The history of Methodism during the year which gave peace to Europe through the battle of Waterloo, would not be complete without noticing the conduct of some of the Methodist soldiers who were engaged in that sanguinary fight. A letter from a colour-sergeant in the First Foot Guards, a member of Society at Westminster, printed in the "Methodist Magazine," † gives a thrilling account of this desperate struggle, and affords abundant evidence that the men who fear God and do His will

* "Methodist Magazine," 1821, p. 673. † *Idem*, 1816, p. 299.

are the bravest and best defenders of their country's interests and honour. This brave soldier—in the crisis of the battle, when officers and comrades were falling so fast from the murderous fire to which they were exposed, that the line was rendered unsteady by the rapid succession of casualties—took the bloody coat of a fallen officer, and, placing it on the point of his halberd, advanced with it twenty paces in front of the line, cheering the men, and telling them that, while their officers bled, they should not reckon their lives dear. A remarkable case is on record of a poor soldier who had heard the Gospel faithfully preached in Ireland, but had never fully given himself to God. But amid the toil and dangers of that bloody day, as he lifted his heart in earnest prayer, what he had previously heard came with saving power to his soul, and he was enabled to rejoice in God's pardoning mercy. A conversion amid the struggles, slaughter, and blood of Waterloo!

Richard Watson at Hull.

The Conference of 1814 removed Richard Watson from Wakefield to Hull. Jonathan Barker was superintendent, and his other colleagues were H. S. Hopwood and John Scott. There had previously been three Methodist chapels in the town, and this year was distinguished by the erection of a fourth in Waltham Street, a larger and more elegant structure than either of the others. It was opened for divine service on Friday and Sunday, October seventh and ninth. Messrs. Bunting, Watson, Newton, and Burdsall officiated. Many friends of Methodism in Hull thought this an unseasonable effort, and strongly felt that the erection was premature, and would prove a failure. They were, however, disappointed. The result showed that the zealous projectors of this important movement had not only accurately calculated their resources, but truly appre-

ciated the religious demand for increased accommodation. "To this result," however, "the ministry of Watson mainly contributed. Many families, previously unacquainted with Methodism, principally through his instrumentality were permanently attached to this place of worship." At no period of his life does his preaching appear to greater advantage than during its exercise in Hull. "His sermons," says his biographer, "were marked by a force of reasoning and a persuasiveness almost peculiar to himself: embodying the great and vital truths of Christianity, and delivered with earnestness and pathos, they were the means of reclaiming many a wanderer from God, of conveying strength and comfort to many a broken heart, and of stimulating believers to 'go on unto perfection.'" *

It may present a curious inquiry to some persons, how the refined, elevated, philosophical, although truly sanctified, Richard Watson would act in the excitement of a Methodist revival. One Monday evening, when preaching in Waltham Street chapel, an unusual power attended the word, and several persons wept aloud. At the close of the public service he retired into the vestry, where many of the congregation followed him, inquiring, "What must we do to be saved?" The cries of those convinced of sin were loud and piercing. For a while Watson seemed to be stunned, and said to one of the class-leaders, "What shall we do, brother?" "Let us pray to Him who can save," was the answer. Without uttering another word, he kneeled by the side of the penitents, and continued to intercede with God on their behalf, pointing them at intervals to the sacrifice of Christ, and encouraging them to put their trust in Him. Three of them obtained the inward witness of their acceptance in the Beloved, and

* Jackson's "Life of Watson," p. 170.

were enabled to rejoice in the pardoning mercy of God. Like men of meaner powers, he felt the presence of God's Spirit, saw incontestable proofs of the working of the Holy One, and, gladly confessing the Lord, pointed sinners to the source of all spiritual life, and rejoiced to see them look on Him and live.

The Conference of 1815.

The Conference of 1815, which commenced in Manchester on the thirty-first of July, was perhaps the largest hitherto assembled. Not less than three hundred and forty ministers were present. Thousands from neighbouring towns flocked to the various services; Sundays and week-days, the spacious sanctuaries were all thronged; and when the forty-eight young ministers were received into full connexion, many hundreds could not gain admission into the Oldham Street chapel. The suffrages for the Presidency were in favour of John Barber, and Jabez Bunting was re-elected secretary. There was a cheering increase of nearly nine thousand members. Thirteen new Circuits were made: * the Missions contained nine stations in Ireland, and forty-three in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and the West Indies; fifty-six candidates were received on trial; thirteen ministers desisted from travelling, among whom was Peter Le Sueur, "who had been employed as a French missionary;" and only five were called away by death. These were, "honest Isaac Brown," as Wesley was wont to call him, a man of child-like innocency, who laboured in the ministry fifty-five years and died peace-

* Harwich, Oakhampton, St. David's, and Newtownlimavady were no longer reckoned as Circuits; while Windsor, High Wycombe, Manningtree, Staplecross, Holt, Scilly Islands, Tiverton, Sticklepath, Cowbridge, Broseley, Whitchurch, Worksop, Sleaford, Brigg, Stockton, and Morpeth were numbered as Circuits, and Shields was divided, the new Circuits being called North and South Shields.

fully:—WILLIAM SAUNDERS, who entered the vineyard in 1777:—JOHN DAVIS, a native of London, who closed a short missionary career in the West Indies:—JOSEPH DRAKE, who came to the Conference in good health, and was in his grave ere it closed:—and, finally, THOMAS COKE, the circumstances of whose death we have just recorded.

Its transactions.

The president was appointed to preside over the ensuing Irish Conference; or if personally unable, authorized to provide a substitute. The Committee of Privileges was re-appointed. Collections were ordered to be made, limited as usual, on behalf of one hundred and nineteen chapels. Minutes were made for restoring the singing in Methodist chapels to the style recommended by Wesley, for regulating the manner of administering the Lord's Supper, and for a suitable mode of conducting public worship, when it was celebrated in Methodist chapels during church hours. Directions were given to the chairmen of Districts, as to the examination of young men on trial for the ministry, with a view to promote their intellectual improvement. Further modifications were made in the rules of the Preachers' Auxiliary Fund.

Formation of a mixed Missionary Committee.

The removal of Dr. Coke, general superintendent of the Missions, brought that branch of the work under the careful consideration of the Conference. This resulted in a series of resolutions, prescribing the manner in which efficient oversight might be given to the Missions between the sittings of Conference. The principal new feature of this plan was the appointment of an executive Committee, consisting of an equal number of preachers and laymen. These were to form a Committee of examination and finance for the current year. The successful progress in the formation of Missionary Societies in different parts of the Con-

nexion, and the spirit of liberality so generally evinced, encouraged the Conference to make a large addition to the number of missionaries previously employed. It was decided to send four additional missionaries to the West Indies, four to the British provinces of North America, two to Newfoundland, and six to Ceylon and the East.

It was also determined to drop the terms *Home Missions* and *Home Missionaries*, and either to make the several stations separate Circuits, or to attach them to existing Circuits. For the purpose of enabling the Contingent Fund to afford the necessary aid for the extension of the Gospel into destitute parts of the country, in connexion with existing Circuit arrangements, it was agreed to establish a new collection, to be made in all the chapels in the month of July, the proceeds to be brought to the ensuing Conference, and added to the amount of the Yearly Collection. This was the origin of the July Collection. The times for making the several connexional collections and subscriptions were clearly stated, and earnest directions and exhortations given to limit the amount of expenses in various ways. Committees for Kingswood and Woodhouse Grove Schools were re-appointed. To these minutes were appended Miscellaneous Orders and Regulations.

No intelligent person, acquainted with the Minutes of former years, can carefully consider those now before us without being struck with their marked superiority. The arrangement, order, and statesmanlike bearing of the whole are distinctly perceptible. If destitute of any information as to the origin of this change, we should, from internal evidence alone, venture to say that the pen of the Conference scribe had at length fallen into the hand of a master, and that a mind of more than ordinary talent had been at work on this portion of con-

nexional legislation. This is very apparent, although Jabez Bunting was now secretary of the Conference only for the second time.

Death of Benjamin Rhodes and Richard Rodda.

Within a month or two after the close of this Conference, Benjamin Rhodes and Richard Rodda, two old preachers, who had borne the burden in the heat of the day, were taken to their reward.

The father of Benjamin Rhodes was a schoolmaster in Kexborough, Yorkshire; a God-fearing man, who "used family and private prayer, read the Scriptures and other good books daily, and instructed and catechized his children." Surrounded by these gracious influences, Benjamin's early years are bright and calm as a summer sea. When only eleven his young soul is deeply moved by the eloquent Whitefield's word. The first emotion of terror melts away into tenderness, and his heart is "sweetly drawn after God." Lightness and love of frolic are his strongest youthful temptations, holding his soul in bondage, and damping his religious joys. But, wandering in a wood, he is benighted, and communes with his own heart. His former impressions "return with much sweetness;" his soul "overflows with penitential tenderness;" he sings and prays, thankful that God had found him "in the field of the wood." His old enemy, the love of pleasure, again assails him, and carries him away "as with a flood;" not into gross sins,—for he never swore an "oath, or took the name of God into his lips on any light occasion,—but into foolish company, gaiety, and youthful vanities." At nineteen he obtains a sense of the divine favour, falls "among those who held the decrees," is perplexed about the "five points," and led to the verge of infidelity. Delivered from this "horrible pit," he becomes established in grace, meets

several classes, and begins to preach in surrounding villages.

In 1766, he enters the ministry. As you read his beautiful autobiography, so chastely written, and abounding with poetic touches, you feel that his course of itinerancy is a "soft-flowing Kedron,"—calm, gentle, and uniform—compared with the stormy currents on which many men of his time had to sail. No "fighting with beasts at Ephesus;" no fleeing before angry mobs; no storm or tempest; all is like the mind of the man himself,—a lake without a ripple, beaming beneath heaven's own sunlight, and lovely to behold. The last nine of his forty years of full ministerial duty, he cannot stand upright; yet he is always at his post. In his seventy-second year "a cold, a rupture of a small blood-vessel, and pain at the pit of the stomach," bring him to the verge of death. But in three weeks he so far rallies as to warrant hopes of a little addition to his life. The pain suddenly returns, and in half-an hour he falls from his seat, and expires in the arms of his eldest daughter. "I am more than resigned; I am cheerful and thankful that the Lord doeth all things well;"—"I think I shall not live long; but I *know* if I die I shall go to heaven;"—"When I sleep, I sleep in the arms of Jesus; whether I live or die, I shall be happy;" are golden sentences, memorial of his deep and hallowed piety. Simple in manners; mild and humane in disposition; walking the path of life in unspotted uprightness, he was beloved by all. Favoured with a good English education, his advantages were far beyond many of his brethren; and his style of preaching was more elegant and finished than theirs. The intellect which conceived, and the heart which welled forth, such noble strains as those of his "Poem on the Messiah," must have drunk deeply at the true Castalian

fount. His prayer is answered and his resolve fulfilled:—

"May I but find the grace
To fill an humble place
In that inheritance above;
My tuneful voice I'll raise
In songs of loudest praise,
To spread Thy fame, Redeeming Love!"

We have already devoted a few lines to the early life and ministry of RICHARD RODDA; but his history is too remarkable, and his character too lovely, to be dismissed without further notice. Cornwall is honoured as the place of his birth, in 1743. The "drawings of the Father" are strongly felt, and resolutely resisted, until his thirteenth year, when he seeks admission into the Methodist Society. Two years more, and "God gives him a clear sense of His forgiving love." Naturally cheerful, and strongly tempted to levity, he is "often overtaken before he is aware." Brought to the gates of death by a malignant fever, his soul longs for flight, "and struggles, like a bird in a cage, to obtain her liberty." He thinks his spirit has "actually left the body, and is mounting upward." "Visions of God and glory," far beyond expression, flash upon his mind. He recovers, and the first time he goes abroad, the press-gang claims the feeble and staggering youth for his majesty's navy. Rescued from their clutches by an honest Quaker, he returns home with joyfulness. He prays in public, to the no small refreshment of his own spirit; obtains the blessing of perfect love; is strongly tempted to blasphemy and suicide; and soon begins to exhort sinners to repentance.

Hitherto, great dangers, followed by remarkable deliverances, throng his path. Standing "in a tin-pit, about eight yards from the top, and four from the bottom," a

large stone falls: he hears the warning shout; leans his head a little forward; the stone strikes between his shoulders; he falls twelve feet among small stones; but a few bruises are the only injury he sustains. While standing on the top of a "borough of attle," it sinks in a moment, and he goes down quick into an old pit, where a miner at work "is greatly surprised to see him," and "receives no damage." A greater deliverance, one often employed as a remarkable instance of a preserving providence, now comes. Working at the bottom of a pit, he feels a strong impulse to pray. While pouring forth, on bended knees, his enlarged and happy soul, a great stone drops in front, higher than his head; a second and a third fall, one on either hand; a fourth drops on the other three, and arches him over, about four inches above his head. Showers of small stones fall upon his legs and feet behind, and upon the roof of his prison. But he is "delivered from so great a death" without injury. "What shall we say to these things?" How will an infidel philosophy account for the strong impulse to pray at that particular moment? Had it not come, had he remained standing at his work two minutes more, there was nothing for him but inevitable death.

Convictions of his call to preach now distress Rodda's mind, and his first attempt is worth recording. Anxious "to divide the word in a proper manner," his "skeleton" is carefully prepared; he walks along a bye-road, preaching it over all the way. But, alas! when he faces the congregation, the "fine skeleton vanishes," and he is "filled with shame and confusion." His future attempts are more successful, and many stouthearted sinners are wounded by the keenness of his sword, and the energy of its stroke. "The power of God was with him both to wound and to heal." Called to the ministry, in 1768, he braces himself for its

difficulties, and boldly battles with its trials. Many are the scenes of rudeness, ridicule, and violence which he encounters. The mob dress up a piece of wood like a man, "put an old wig on its head," and dance it before him; while others pelt him with dirt and broken tiles; but none of these things hinder or hurt him. At Hereford, "a man nicknamed Bacon" gathers dirt out of the kennel, flings it in his face and eyes, and so "besmears" him, that "he can proceed no further."

After thirty-three years' zealous toil, he becomes a supernumerary in London. The hardships of his early ministry, and especially "the long succession of damp beds," weakened a naturally vigorous constitution, and laid the foundation of a painful asthma, from which he endures almost a martyrdom of suffering. "I suffer much, but God is with me." "It is now about forty-eight years since the Lord set my soul at glorious liberty, and I have found Him a gracious God all the way, faithful to His promise; not one word has failed." "Come, pray; but do not pray for my restoration, or for life: why should I live when my work is done?" "I could go to Smithfield, and die for His dear cause." "Come, Lord Jesus! come quickly." These are among the dying utterances of Richard Rodda,—a man of sound judgment, independent character, respectable talents, great natural courage, deep piety, abundant labours, and the winner of many souls to Christ.

Death of Mrs. Fletcher.

On the ninth of December, 1815, Mrs. Fletcher exchanged mortality for life, at Madeley, being about seventy-six years of age. Her life during a widowhood of thirty years was a suitable sequel to a course of holy living and holy action. Exulting in the salvation of God, her whole language was a song of praise. For a long time before her death, the number of persons in her Classes ranged from

seventy to a hundred. Their spiritual interests she fostered, and over them she watched like a mother in Israel. A day or two before her death, she said to her friends, "I am drawing near to glory;" and in this frame of mind she closed her earthly career, and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus.

Turning away from the departure of sanctified age to the home of heaven, we have to contemplate the consecration of youthful talent to the service of the Lord's sanctuary. In the early part of 1812 there lived at Humberstone, near Grimsby, a respectable Methodist named Tomlinson: zealous for the good of others, he had often pressed the importance of spiritual religion on the attention of a resident in the neighbouring village of Waltham, as they casually met on horseback. This person was taken ill, and Tomlinson's visits and instructions were now gladly received, and rendered the means of his conversion. He had a son called John, a clever, thoughtful lad. From his studious habits and serious disposition, he was a great favourite with the respectable inhabitants of the neighbourhood. At the time of his father's illness, he was studying under a clergyman at Irby, with a view to the ministry of the Church of England. John took a deep interest in Tomlinson's conversation with his father, joined them in prayer, found peace with God, and became a happy and earnest follower of Christ.

Conversion of Mr. Beecham.

Soon after his conversion, John began to exhort and preach. Others in the village sought and obtained the enjoyment of religion, one of whom, after a lapse of years, became his wife. He also introduced Methodism into Ashby, where a Society was formed in 1813. The father died; but the son pursued his course of happy toil. Through ignorance, or enmity to the truth,

persecution was excited; he was treated with great violence by the mob; but he continued faithful to the Saviour whose grace he had experienced, and rejoiced that he was counted worthy to "suffer for His name's sake." This open violence, however, was only a small part of the opposition he had to bear. His connexion with the Methodists, conducting prayer-meetings, and preaching in the villages, completely alienated from him the friendship of his former patrons. Those who had promoted his preparing for the ministry of the Established Church withdrew all their friendly aid. But this did not divert him from his course of conscientious duty. He went into business to provide for his support, still prosecuted his classical and theological studies, and diligently laboured for the salvation of his neighbours. This fidelity to his convictions marked him out as a fit person to occupy a more extended sphere of usefulness. At the Conference of this year, he was received on trial for the Methodist ministry. This was John, afterward Dr., Beecham, who zealously served the Connexion as one of the missionary secretaries, and was, in 1850, president of the Conference.*

As Dr. Beecham's death took place at a period beyond that to which our narrative extends, we will depart from our usual course, and embrace this as the most favourable opportunity for supplying a brief sketch of one well worth commemoration among the "worthies" of Methodism. Entering the ministry in 1815, he laboured with great acceptance at Winterton, Snaith, Barnsley, Howden, Warrington, and Liverpool. He possessed a good voice and manly presence. His general bearing was gentlemanly and dignified; his pulpit manner somewhat stiff, self-possessed, and unimpas-

* See Dr. Hoole's Memoir of him, in the "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," 1856, p. 578.

sioned. A diligent student of Scripture and theological writings, his sermons were instructive and profitable; while "his pastoral attention to the afflicted and the sorrowing won the affectionate respect of the people."

Dr. Beecham will be chiefly remembered, however, as one of the ablest among the many able men intrusted with the missionary secretariat. Though generally cautious and slow in coming to conclusions, his judgment, when formed, was usually so clear and sound, that it might be relied on with safety. This quality of mind was of eminent service in his later years, when it was felt desirable to erect several of the colonial missions into Affiliated Conferences. The documents in most of these cases issued from his pen, and were drawn up with great care and legislative skill.

The ecclesiastical polity of Methodism was early forced upon Dr. Beecham's attention, and few men of his day had so thorough an acquaintance with its principles and details. His "Essay" on our Church Constitution, written amidst the controversies of 1828, when he was a comparatively young minister, must ever remain among the noblest defences of the bulwarks of our Zion. His general reading, especially before he became burdened with the manifold details of the Mission House, was extensive and accurate; and we believe he made it all but his life-long practice to read one chapter of the Greek Testament every morning, before he entered upon the ordinary duties of his calling.

His early appointment to permanent office, and his devotion to the business of his department, prevented Dr. Beecham being so well and widely known among the ministers as he deserved. Seen only in the comparative distance, many of his brethren thought him wanting in genial affability. Dignified and gentlemanly he certainly

was; but cold, stiff, and distant toward his ministerial fellows, he assuredly *was not.* And many who entertained the erroneous impression for years, have felt it vanish in a moment, when they had a fair opportunity of knowing him. His great general ability, spotless integrity, and unwavering consistency ultimately gained him the highest position his community had to bestow. The year of his presidency was one of deep uneasiness and anxiety; but never was the Conference chair filled with greater dignity; never was the helm of the connexional vessel amid troubled waters held with steadier or more skilful hand. Utterly opposed to all who would uproot the first principles of our Church government, or revolutionize our ecclesiastical constitution, he was, nevertheless, convinced that, if in matters of detail some alterations were thought desirable, it was best honestly to examine, and, if possible, to remove, all "causes of attrition;" that the connexional machinery might work more smoothly and successfully.

His stream of life—ever deepening, ever widening—flowed clear, and calm, and steady from the beginning, until it became deepest, calmest, widest, as it approached the broad ocean of the future. Soon after his return from his important mission to British America in 1855, his health began to fail. Early in the following spring, he sought relaxation and change; but all was in vain. The goodly age of nearly "threescore years and ten" had arrived, and his work was done. Bright visions gladdened his last hours, and deep spiritual utterances told his readiness for heaven. Fixing his eyes, now sunken, but preternaturally bright, on one particular spot, he said to his faithful old servant, "There they are: I see them: they are coming, bright and shining! They are on the bridge. It is thorny, but it will soon be bright. It is all right,

Sarah; it is all right." "Is Jesus with you?" "Yes; not a cloud. All is peace!" "Are you happy in relying on your Saviour?" said his medical attendant. "Very happy! very happy!" "Do you feel peace?" "Yes, perfect peace!"—and with these words still lingering on his lips, he quietly fell asleep in the arms of his Saviour. There are few to whom the wisest of men's beautiful description of a godly life can be more appropriately applied than to JOHN BEECHAM:—"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

These incidents prove that the Methodism of this period retained its vitality and spiritual power. It still conducted hoary saints and penitent believers through a triumphant or peaceful death to a blissful immortality; it still led young and ardent minds to feel the evil of sin, and the insufficiency of earthly good to confer happiness, and to flee for refuge to the hope set before them.

We, then, must now direct attention to the grand characteristic of this period of Methodist history. This was unquestionably missionary development, as set forth in the encouraging reports received from foreign fields of labour, stimulating the exertions, contributions, and policy of the Connexion at large for the support and extension of the kingdom of Christ.

Progress of the missionaries in the East.

In the first instance we naturally turn to the East, which the noble enterprise and lamented death of Coke had invested with great importance. From this quarter the most encouraging intelligence had been received. By the kindness of Mr. Money, the missionaries were relieved from pecuniary embarrassment, and furnished with the means of prosecuting their work. Preparations were accordingly made for their removal to Ceylon, which was destined to be

the seat of their first exertions. The state of Mrs. Harvard's health not permitting her to remove from Bombay immediately, her husband remained there for some time, while the other brethren proceeded to Ceylon, where they were received with the greatest kindness and respect. Sir Robert Brownrigg, who had been apprised of their coming, ordered the Government house at Point de Galle to be prepared for their reception; and Lord Molesworth, commandant of the garrison, and his lady manifested toward them a kindness and courtesy truly Christian. His lordship, knowing that boats were gone off to bring the missionaries on shore, waited for them on the jetty. When Mr. Squance, who was the first to step out of the boat, landed, Lord Molesworth took him by the hand, asked his name, and, finding it to be that of one of the expected missionaries, said, "Yes, you are the man;" and added with great emotion, "All this is in answer to prayer. I have long been praying that missionaries might be sent to India, and the Lord has answered." One of the governor's servants at Point de Galle had orders from his Excellency to make every necessary provision for the missionaries at his expense; but for several days after their landing they sat chiefly at Lord Molesworth's table.

Their favourable reception in Ceylon.

The first Sabbath was a memorable day. The Dutch church was placed at their disposal for divine service. We are glad to be able to give an authentic account of this first Methodist public worship in Ceylon, and its results, by the kindness of the only survivor of this band of missionaries. Most of the English residents attended, and a goodly number of Dutch and Portuguese, who had some knowledge of the English language. By the command of Lord Molesworth, the soldiers also were marched to the Church, altogether forming a numerous and most interest-

First Sabbath services.

ing congregation. The service was conducted after the manner of the Church of England; Mr. Lynch read the Liturgy, and Mr. Squance preached from 2 Cor. x. 14: "For we are come as far as unto you also in preaching the Gospel of Christ." God was pleased to accompany His word by a special divine influence, and, under this first discourse, Lord Molesworth, and Lalmon, a native of European origin, were awakened to an intense desire for salvation. In penitence and faith, they sought and obtained the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins.

Conversion and affecting account of Lord Molesworth.

The case of Lord Molesworth is one of deep and thrilling interest. A party had been invited to dine at his lordship's house; but the services of the forenoon had utterly disqualified him for all enjoyment in worldly society. He therefore stole away from his company late in the evening, and came to the house where the missionaries were residing. They were holding a prayer-meeting. His lordship, on entering, said, "Gentlemen, the company now at my house is very uncongenial to my present state of feeling, and I am come to request that you will, if you please, spend a little time with me in prayer." The missionaries resumed their prayer-meeting, and his lordship obtained a clear witness of his adoption. He instantly exclaimed, "Do, brethren, let me praise God with you too;" and then he poured out his soul in strains of the most fervid devotion, and in the language of ardent gratitude and praise. In conclusion he exclaimed, "This has been the best day of my life."

From this time he was in the habit of calling on one of the missionaries every day to accompany him in his morning rides, for the purpose of religious conversation. On one of these occasions he remarked to Mr. Squance, "My

mind has of late been greatly agitated in reference to one of the disputed points of religion." "O, my lord," replied the missionary, "we do not come to this country to agitate the minds of our converts with any of the disputed points in religion. We wish to merge all our minor points of difference in those great essentials in which we are happily united." "But I must," said his Lordship, "have my mind relieved on this subject: it is the doctrine of final perseverance." The missionary, not deeming it advisable to enter into controversy, simply replied, "O, my lord, we can soon set your mind to rest on this subject. The way to persevere to the end is, now to get the Spirit to bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God, to go on the next moment to enjoy the same delightful consciousness, to attain the experience of the apostle, and with him to say, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.'" The big tear started into his lordship's eye, and with a glow of holy delight he exclaimed, "That is the right way, that is the most effectual way." From this time he exemplified the power of Christian principle, and adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things. Shortly afterward he left India; but, by a mysterious dispensation of Providence, the transport "Arniston," in which he sailed, was wrecked near Cape Laguellas, on the coast of South Africa, and all, with the exception of two or three, found a watery grave. The survivors stated that, while the ship was sinking, Lord Molesworth was actively employed in walking up and down her decks, pointing the dying seamen, soldiers, and passengers to the "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Having finished his work of mercy, he embraced Lady Molesworth,

and they sank locked in each other's arms, and thus, folded together in death, they were washed on shore. In his lordship's experience was realized the wish so often expressed :—

> "Happy, if with my latest breath
> I may but gasp His name;
> Preach him to all, and cry in death,
> 'Behold, behold the Lamb!'"

Conversion of Mr. Lalmon.

When the missionaries repaired to their several spheres of labour, the other convert, Mr. Lalmon, was left under the pastoral oversight of Mr. Clough, and made rapid progress in religious knowledge and Christian holiness. After giving full proof of a divine call, he was set apart to the work of the ministry, and has continued to this day a faithful and successful evangelist to his own countrymen. Thus did God encourage His servants at the very commencement of their labours, by showing how admirably the Gospel is suited to meet the circumstances of different classes of society, and of different grades of intellect; that it is indeed of universal adaptation.*

Arrangements for the establishment of the Mission.

Thankful as they were for this encouragement, the missionaries had yet to secure the great object for which all their preliminary voyaging and labours had been undertaken,—preaching the Gospel to the heathen. The best plan that could be devised even for their location for this purpose, presented very serious difficulties. It was, of course, apparent that they must separate from each other; and this, in itself, was a severe trial. Then they had no head to decide how this was to be done, and to appoint each to his proper station. In one part of the island Tamul was spoken, and in the other Cingalese, and the appointments now made would, to a certain extent, be

* Communicated by the Rev. T. H. Squance.

final; any after interchange involving the necessity of acquiring a language. In this difficulty they remembered Him in whose service they were engaged, and who had promised them His continual presence. They sought the guidance and blessing of the great Head of the Church by earnest prayer; and having carefully considered the difficulties and requirements of the several fields of labour before them, they allotted each man's sphere of action by ballot. The result was the following appointments:—JAFFNA, James Lynch and T. H. Squance; BATTICALOA, William Ault; MATURA, George Erskine; POINT DE GALLE, Benjamin Clough. "We felt," says one of them, "truly resigned to our appointments; not a murmuring word, nor, we believe, a thought of the kind existed. At this instant our feelings were most acute. We found ourselves at last about to separate to various and distant parts of the island. We embraced, and wept, and prayed for each other. God had given us the spirit of love in an unusual degree." *

It is favoured by the colonial authorities.

The great importance of this noble enterprise is apparent from the ardent good-will with which the missionaries were received, and their object promoted, by those in power, who had no knowledge of Methodism, and no interest in aiding its extension. Soon after their arrival in Ceylon, General Sir Robert Brownrigg, G.C.B., the governor, to whom they had been strongly recommended by Sir Evan Nepean, the governor of Bombay, sent his brother-in-law, the Rev. George Bisset, one of the colonial chaplains, from Colombo, to Point de Galle, to bid the missionaries welcome to the island, and to procure information as to their plan of operations. They gladly met this kind overture, by furnishing every

* HARVARD'S "Narrative of the Mission to Ceylon and India," p. 155.

information in their power, and explaining that their immediate object in Ceylon was to commence the study of the native languages, in order to qualify themselves for labouring among the Ceylonese; and that, previously to their acquiring a sufficient knowledge of the native tongues, they would avail themselves of every opportunity of teaching and preaching to such as might be disposed to hear them in English. Mr. Bisset was fully satisfied with their proposed course, and assured them that they might expect every encouragement in so good a work. A few days afterward the missionaries had another most interesting interview with Mr. Bisset, in the course of which he stated to them, that the governor, with himself and others of our respected countrymen at the seat of government, not having any knowledge of our funds, and of the way in which the Mission was to be supported, had consulted how they might assist it, in case it should be needful. The only way in which this could be done, seemed to be by the colonial government offering each missionary a certain stipend for teaching the English language to the children of the principal native inhabitants in a few of the most important towns. This, it was suggested, would not only aid the funds of the Mission, but most effectually subserve its design, by introducing the missionaries to an acquaintance with the most respectable natives, procuring for them considerable influence, and, at the same time, affording them the best opportunity of becoming acquainted with the native languages. After careful consideration, the plan was cordially received. Indeed, it appeared "to recommend itself by so many advantages, that they could regard it in no other point of view, than as an intimation from Providence of the path which had been chosen for them."

The missionaries sought neither this official countenance, nor the pecuniary aid of government. Both were generously and spontaneously tendered towards fostering an effort to introduce Christianity to the native population, which all admitted to be exceedingly desirable. And the result amply met every reasonable hope. The missionaries entered on their work, and were in the course of the year reinforced by six additional men. This enabled them to provide for the most important stations in Ceylon, and to send one missionary to Bombay, and another to Madras, to initiate Wesleyan Missions on the continent of India. These labours were, by the blessing of God, crowned with success fully equal to the means employed.

Prosperity of Missions in the West Indies and America.

While the newly formed Mission to the East presented the most favourable and promising appearances, the older Missions in other parts of the world, especially in the West Indies and America, were prospering beyond all previous example. In Jamaica, the principal chapels of Morant Bay and Kingston, which had been shut up, with few and brief intermissions, for ten years, by the intolerance of the local government, were allowed to be re-opened for divine worship about the end of 1815; and, in the following May, leave was given to Mr. Shipman to take the oaths, and receive a licence to preach. He arrived on the island in January, 1815, but was not allowed to exercise his ministry until May, 1816. The joy of the poor persecuted Society at being suffered to worship God again in their own sanctuary, is thus described by a missionary on the spot: "The people, with joy sparkling in their eyes, and feelings of gratitude visibly portrayed on their countenances, came up *once more* to the house of the Lord. But certain I am, that few of our

Jamaica.

friends in England can have any conception of the joy this merciful and happy circumstance diffused, because none have been prevented from worshipping God for eight or ten years, either by national or municipal laws; and, I may add, we only appreciate our privileges by a privation of them." The cheering prospect which the opening of the chapels and the licensing of the missionary gave to the Mission, is described by the same pen: "We are now going on more comfortably, and have every reason to believe that the Lord is carrying on a good work. Many in Kingston appear to be growing in grace, and our numbers are daily increasing. New openings might be made with advantage in the country. We have lately had invitations to two large estates; and we hope that the Lord will soon open before us such a door, that we shall be able (as far as our contracted means will allow us) to make known unto the people what is the exceeding riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus." *

Antigua.

In Antigua, the Mission cause steadily held on its way. Many respectable white people attended preaching, and about twenty were in Society. But the great majority of the members were black and coloured persons, who gladly received the word. Their previous state of ignorance, and the peculiar trials to which slavery exposed them, caused the walk of many to be irregular. They required very vigilant oversight on the part of the missionaries; and discipline was administered with godly fidelity. The Societies continued to increase. Mr. Coultas writes from Parham, in January, 1816: "The first quarter I was here, we expelled sixty-six for different offences. After that, we had seven hundred and eighty-three left. Since that time, thirty have died; and we

* Mr. Shipman's letter in the "Methodist Magazine," 1816, p. 874.

have expelled, for various crimes, one hundred and fifty-three. But, after deducting this one hundred and eighty-three, we have nine hundred and fifty-three in Society, giving a clear increase of one hundred and seventy."

St. Kitt's, Tortola, St. Vincent's, Nevis, and other islands.

St. Kitt's, Tortola, St. Vincent's, Nevis, and other islands, presented similar signs of spiritual prosperity. Instability of character was prevalent; continual instruction and vigilance were required; but where missionaries were provided in such numbers as to render this oversight possible, the progress of the work of God was very considerable. Unfortunately a minister would occasionally fall, by premature death, and much loss was sustained before his place could be supplied. Mr. Dace, writing from St. Vincent's, January, 1816, says, "The peace and prosperity with which the great Head of the church has favoured us, encourage us in the midst of all our difficulties which we are called to encounter We have large and respectable congregations, and our Society is increasing."* And Mr. Mortier, from Nevis, April 16th, 1816, observes, "In this place, once stones and dirt were thrown at us in profusion; but now a spirit of hearing has succeeded that of opposition. The members of our Society are a loving people. The devil's kingdom has had a firm basis in this place for a long time; but it seems to be giving way at length to the powerful efficacy of the Gospel of the Son of God. Our chapel was never so well attended as it is at present."† Everywhere throughout these islands, there was an earnest desire for an increased number of missionaries. Numerous appeals for help were sent home, in almost every conceivable variety of form.

This was also the case throughout the several Circuits in

* "Methodist Magazine," 1816, p. 473. † *Ibid.*, p. 956.

British America.

Nova Scotia. The official communication from the District Meeting of that province, July sixteenth, 1816, states, "We feel ourselves peculiarly happy in informing you, that the prospect of good in this District is truly great, and of course truly pleasing; and we are each of us departing to our respective Circuits with the cheering prospect of better days. We have had various petitions from various parts of the provinces for additional preachers: but we have left those places open only where the call is most pressing, and where we think it would be cruel to deny them, if the financial state of the Society at home would allow their being sent."

Methodism in the United States.

The magnitude of the work under the direct charge of the British and Irish Conferences has led us hitherto to abstain from any mention of the progress of Methodism in the United States of America. Nor can we now do more than present a rapid summary of the public ecclesiastical action of this part of the Methodist family, although, during the period under consideration, it made more rapid progress than any other religious community. The work had increased so greatly before the death of Wesley, that the preachers could not travel far enough to meet in one General Conference; and this led to the formation of District Conferences in various parts of the country. In 1791, thirteen of these assemblies were held. But, as no one of these possessed authority over the whole community, it became necessary to create an organization having this supreme authority. For this purpose Bishop Asbury proposed the appointment of a Council, to be composed of bishops and "presiding elders;" (as the chairman of Districts were called;) and, after some debate, the Council was formed. But, after meeting two sessions, it did not give satisfaction, and a General Con-

ference, open to all the preachers in full Connexion, was held in Baltimore, November, 1792, when several important alterations in the economy of Methodism were proposed. One of these, put forth by James O'Kelly, aimed at limiting the power of the bishops in stationing the preachers. This being rejected by a majority, O'Kelly seceded. He induced several preachers, and many of the people, to go with him, and they formed a distinct Body under the title of "the Republican Methodists." It, however, failed to maintain a separate existence; and, after a while, merged into other denominations. At this Conference the office of presiding elder was formally established. The appointment previously had been in the hands of the bishops on their own authority; and it was now confirmed by the Conference. Other important rules were enacted, and another General Conference was appointed to be held at the end of four years.

Continued prosperity of Methodism in America.

Although still persecuted in some places, American Methodism continued to spread; until, in 1796, a Circuit having been formed in Vermont, it was introduced into every State of the Union. At the General Conference of 1796, it was resolved, that "the District Conferences, which had previously reached the number of twenty, but had been gradually reduced, should be but six in the ensuing year." At the General Conference of 1800, Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury presided; and, as this Conference *lent* the Doctor to the brethren in England, as already stated, Richard Whatcoat, who accompanied him on his first visit to America, was elected and ordained a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. About this time camp-meetings first began to be held. They originated among the Presbyterians and Methodists, under the labours of two brothers, named M'Gee, one being a

Presbyterian, and the other a Methodist minister. At some of these meetings, especially at the beginning, the power of God was eminently present. Afterwards, such crowds came together, that great irregularity was produced. In 1804, the General Conference was held in Baltimore, and presided over by Bishops Coke, Asbury, and Whatcoat. One of its most important acts was the establishment of the Methodist Book Concern in New York. At this Conference, also, the bounds of the several yearly Conferences were defined, and printed in the Book of Discipline.

The fifth General Conference was held in Baltimore, in 1808; Bishop Asbury alone presiding. Dr. Coke was in England, and Bishop Whatcoat had died two years before. William M'Kendree was elected and ordained a bishop. Provision was now made for giving the General Conference a representative character; each Annual Conference being at liberty to send one out of every five of its members. It was also decided that the General Conference should meet on the 1st of May in every fourth year. The bishops were authorized to organize another Annual Conference, in addition to the seven previously existing, should they think fit. Accordingly that of Genesee was formed in 1811, including the whole of western and central New York and Upper Canada.*

* The following extract from a useful work shows the remarkably rapid spread of Methodism in America:—"It is now just forty years since the first Methodist preachers were sent to America by Mr. Wesley; they came over in 1769. In the United States there are (1809) three hundred and twenty-four Circuits, five hundred and eighty-nine preachers, and one hundred and sixty-three thousand and thirty-eight members. During the same period of forty years, more than three thousand local preachers were raised up amongst us. In the same year, (1809,) Bishop Asbury collected the names of those preachers that were then living, and in connexion with the Methodists. Their number was one thousand six hundred and forty."—Jesse Lee's "History of the American Methodists."

The first delegated Conference assembled in 1812. Some important regulations were made respecting local preachers; measures were taken for raising money for missionary purposes; and the publication of a monthly Methodist periodical was resolved on. The war with England, which broke out almost immediately afterward, severed the Societies in Canada from the newly formed Conference of Genesee. In 1813, another secession took place under the name of "the Reformed Methodist Church." The principal instrument of this division was Pliny Brett, who had been an itinerant minister, but subsequently located, and effected this schism principally by the means of local preachers. At first, the rent was extensive, and the new Connexion promised to be permanent; but, after a while, it merged into other bodies, and ceased to have a separate existence.

Secession of coloured people from the United States Methodists.

In the year 1815, a formal secession of a number of coloured people from Methodism took place. From the beginning the Methodists paid kind attention to Negro and coloured people, who abounded in the Free States; and many of them were brought to the knowledge of salvation. But, unhappily, the inferiority and degradation with which these people were regarded in civil society were imported into the church, and they were frequently treated in the house of God, and whilst engaged in worship, in a manner which led them to believe, that they were regarded by their white brethren as a nuisance.* This conduct led many of the coloured members of Society in Philadelphia to meet as early as 1787, for the purpose of considering the evils under which they laboured. In the following year it was proposed to erect a separate place of worship for their

* Introduction to "The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church."

use. This, however, did not lead to an immediate separation. Bishop Asbury opened the new church, and a nominal union was preserved for some time. But as the grievance which produced discontent among the coloured people continued, so the alienation of many of them increased, until one of their preachers was ordained by Bishop White, after the manner of the Church of England; and the seceders were organized into a separate community called "the African Methodist Episcopal Church." About one thousand persons seceded; and, since that period, they have increased to some fifteen or twenty thousand, having congregations and churches in nearly all the cities and large towns of the Free States, where the coloured people are numerous." *

Progress of Methodism during twenty-five years.

We close our directly historic portion of the present volume with a tabular view of the number of members in Society at the Conference of 1815, and the increase during the twenty-five years which had elapsed since the death of Wesley:—

		MEMBERS IN 1815.
Great Britain		181,706
Ireland		29,357
Missions: France	25	
„ Gibraltar	53	
„ Sierra Leone	100	
„ Cape of Good Hope	42	
„ Ceylon	50	
„ West Indies	17,856	
„ Nova Scotia, &c.	1,759	
		19,885
Total number of members under the care of the British and Irish Conferences		230,948

* GORRIE'S "Episcopal Methodism," p. 87.

	MEMBERS IN 1815.
Brought forward.....	230,948
Total number in the United States	211,129
Total number of members in the Methodist Societies throughout the world in the year 1815.....	442,077

	BRITISH ISLANDS.	MISSIONS.	UNITED STATES.
Total number of Methodists, 1790...	71,668	5,300	43,265
„ „ 1815...	211,063	19,885	211,129
Increase in 25 years	139,395	14,585	167,864
Total number of Ministers, 1790	294	19	198
„ „ 1815	868	74	687
Increase in 25 years	564	55	489

Who can behold these figures and not exclaim, as Wesley did, not long before his death, "What hath God wrought?" This progress is the more remarkable, considering the circumstances in which Methodism was placed at the death of its founder; the difficulties, controversies, and oppositions through which it had afterwards to pass; and the existence of many imperfections and defects in the system which had not yet been remedied. Yet, with all these retarding agencies in operation, the Connexion steadily increased in numbers and power. Strange as this may appear, it presents no marvel to our mind. In the purpose of Divine Providence Britain was evidently designed to exercise a potent and extensive influence on the religion of the world. Bibles, missionaries, and the Gospel were to go forth from the sea-girt home of the Anglo-Saxon race to the ends of the earth. And, this divine purpose being recognised, men may say what they please of the irregularities or imperfections of the Methodist system. Admitting it all to be

true, one thing is undeniable: Methodism proclaimed with a trumpet voice, "Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." It led men, by penitence and prayer, to a thorough experience of salvation. It was, therefore, a suitable instrument for the accomplishment of God's purpose, used and honoured by Him, and so favoured with prosperity, that, in a short series of years, it covered the face of many lands with lovely and flourishing churches, and exerted a godly influence upon all other evangelical communities.

BOOK VI.

THE METHODISM OF THE MIDDLE AGE.

CHAPTER I.

ITS REVIVALS.

Importance of this subject renders further investigation necessary.

THE preceding chapters contain as full an account of the Methodism of this period generally, as it appeared desirable to incorporate in a consecutive history: there are a few topics, however, which require further investigation and exposition. Those remarkable seasons of religious prosperity usually termed REVIVALS, have attracted so much attention, and drawn forth such variety of opinions, that we feel called upon to offer the following exposition of their origin, nature, extraordinary phenomena, and blessed results.

Origin and nature of revivals.

In discussing the origin and nature of religious revivals, we do not affirm that everything pertaining to these wonderful manifestations of grace lies open to human inquiry, or is capable of being fully apprehended and satisfactorily explained. Nor are we disposed to resolve these peculiar visitations into the inscrutable operations of divine sovereignty, which lie altogether beyond the range of human influence or action. Generally, the people of God are first stirred up to increasing spirituality of mind, and to greater diligence to secure a growth in grace. They are then led to earnest intercessory prayer for the salvation

of unconverted relations, friends, and neighbours; until the times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord. A careful and extended inquiry into the subject has made it fully apparent, that the sudden and unaccountable displays of God's saving power, which do not seem to stand connected with any antecedent prayer or faith, and with which we sometimes meet in the history of the Church, are to be regarded as exceptions to the more usual and ordinary proceedings.

Special gracious influence sometimes displayed in heathen lands.

To those, indeed, willing to recognise the abundant grace and power of God, as exercised for the benefit and blessing of mankind, sufficient evidence of His gracious interposition may be seen in the darkest times. Who that believes the explicit teaching of Scripture respecting the goodness and mercy of God, and the prevalent influence of His Holy Spirit, can read the results which followed the teaching of Pythagoras in Croton, without recognising the powerful operation of His saving power to enlighten the minds and reform the lives even of heathen peoples? *

But, whatever exceptions the history of past or present times may furnish, we only expect, as a general rule, to find these extraordinary displays of grace accompanying a clear, distinct, and faithful preaching of the Gospel. We may even say more than this: we have seldom seen these signs follow any preaching in which the great practical truths bearing on human salvation—such as man's danger through the guilt of sin, the necessity of instant repentance, justification by faith alone in the atonement of Christ, the privilege and duty of personal holiness, and the like—have not been made exceedingly prominent. President Edwards, in his account of the great revival in New England,

* See GROTE's "History of Greece," vol. iv., pp. 543-546; and SMITH's "Sacred Annals," vol. iii., p. 597.

says, "About this time I began to preach concerning 'justification by faith alone.' This was attended by a very remarkable blessing. The people, in general, were deeply concerned, and began early to seek acceptance with God, and salvation in the way of the Gospel." * In speaking therefore of the origin of revivals, we direct particular attention to this essential point. It is not rant, nor senseless declamation, nor a profusion of terrific epithets, which are likely to produce a revival; but a plain, earnest, forceful utterance of sterling Gospel truth, enforcing the necessity and holding forth the privilege of a present salvation.

Generally connected with the faithful preaching of Gospel truth.

Some, indeed, have demurred to the application of the term "revival" to these seasons of awakening and conversion, because a revival means a renewal and invigoration of already-existing life, whereas the persons generally affected were previously dead in trespasses and sins. This objection arises from a misapprehension of the real application of the term. We do not call the conversion of an individual a revival, nor, indeed, that of any number of individuals, as such. The term is applied to a society or community of persons; and, thus employed, recognises the fact of the previous existence of real religion among them, and indicates its rapid increase and extension.

A revival, therefore, is a work of grace effected by the Spirit of God on the souls of men; and, in its nature, differs only from the ordinary operations of the Holy Ghost, in the enlightening and conversion of men, by its wider prevalence and greater intensity. A revival necessarily pre-supposes among the people where it takes place the existence of real spiritual religion, as understood and taught by evangelical Christians. Those who regard Christianity as a refined

Nature of a revival.

* "Revivals of Religion, their Nature," &c., p. 2.

Parties who reject our views on this subject.

moral philosophy, possessing no spiritual energy to renovate the heart or affect the conscience; those who repudiate and deny all conscious conversion; and those who maintain that there is no commencement of spiritual life in the heart of man, but that which is initiated in baptism, will, of course, object and oppose the views we advocate, and are very unlikely to be visited with the blessing we describe. They are at perfect liberty to hold their opinions; but we have not so learned Christ. The history of Methodism can possess but little interest for any who do not believe that the Gospel offers a full, a free, and a present salvation; that every penitent sinner may, by faith in Christ, find mercy, and be enabled through this faith to rejoice in a sin-pardoning God; and that thenceforth he may "go from strength to strength," growing in grace, and in holiness of heart and life. Where these truths are believed, taught, and to any extent experienced, there may be a revival of religion.

Origin of revivals.

Strictly speaking, every such gracious season has its origin in the abundant mercy and gracious influence of the Spirit of God. If men are stirred up to pray with unwonted energy, to preach the Gospel with unusual plainness, earnestness, and zeal; if sinners are alarmed on account of their sins, and backsliders tremble under a sense of unfaithfulness, these effects can only result from divine influence. In some of the cases described in the preceding pages, this influence has been marvellously powerful; the stoutest-hearted sinners have fallen overwhelmed before it.

Promoted by human instrumentality.

Usually, however, it is not difficult to perceive the action of human instrumentality in revivals of religion. The Spirit prompts to earnest prayer, and men obey. The same Divine Agent suggests increased plainness of speech and earnestness in offering the Gospel message; and His

servants are found "workers together with Him." These signs are sometimes perceptible long before the pentecostal blessing comes. True, this human instrumentality cannot always be traced to every individual case. On some occations, God speaks directly to the sinner's conscience, and prostrates him at the footstool of mercy in such exquisite anguish, that he can do nothing but groan his desires to God, until His anger is turned away, and the pardoned sinner rejoices in the experience of salvation.

A revival of religion, therefore, is an unusual display of saving grace; a manifestation of divine power working for the increase and extension of religion with more than ordinary effect. Men of the world generally, and even some pious and intelligent Christians, have sometimes manifested a great dislike, and violently opposed revivals. "Wildness, extravagance, madness, fanaticism," are terms liberally applied to the earnestness of preachers, and to the impassioned cries and exclamations of awakened penitents. We say, once for all, that we make no indiscriminate defence of the words or actions generally witnessed in these extraordinary visitations. We have heard preachers express themselves with rashness and indiscretion; and we have seen people in a fearful state of excitement, sometimes leading to very unpleasant results. These things we regret and deplore. But we appeal to any one who believes in the spiritual religion of the Bible, whether such conduct, however much to be regretted, is greatly to be wondered at.

Possibility of occasional impropriety.

Here is a man whose soul is alive to God; on whose heart the Lord's claims to warn sinners of their danger, and point them to Jesus for salvation, lie with fearful weight; whose whole spirit is penetrated with a sense of his own responsibility, and of the intense evil and danger of

Reasonableness of religious excitement.

sin. Yet, in discharging this great duty, he is expected to be uniformly calm and sedate; to use measured expressions, and in no instance to overstep the bounds of reason, or of good taste. The physician, when dealing with a case of great danger, is forgiven if he displays emotion; the advocate, when pleading for the life of a client, is often applauded when he utters language warranted by neither charity nor truth; but the minister, in a case inexpressibly more affecting, must always be cool and unimpassioned. We say, the very reverse may reasonably be expected. To a man holding forth by God's command His offer of mercy to guilty sinners, the words of Dr. Young apply with equal truth and beauty:—

> "On such a theme 't is impious to be calm;
> Passion is reason, transport temper here."

Still less can an awakened sinner, confronted in spirit with the justice of God, and trembling in agony beneath His frown, be expected always to control his emotions, and preserve himself from intense, and, it may be occasionally, injurious, excitement. It should be considered that these frequently are persons previously undisciplined, who find themselves acted on by a new class of fears, feelings, and desires, and to whose minds the Spirit of God has revealed spiritual things with very great power. We shall never forget the agony exhibited in the countenance of a woman, who, while on her knees pleading for mercy, raised her face marked with the deepest anguish, her eyes streaming with tears, and expressed her conviction of danger in the awful, pregnant sentence: "I am hanging over hell by a thread."

No error on this subject is more unfounded than the notion, that this excitement is produced by the character of the sermons and addresses delivered on these occasions.

The woman just mentioned had heard nothing whatever to affect her. While quietly pursuing her usual employment in the afternoon of the day, she was so impressed with the sense of danger that she could not continue her work, but made her way to the chapel, sought refuge in earnest prayer, and, after some hours, found peace, and went home rejoicing. Indeed, from lengthened observation, we are led to the opinion, that at no time do sermons or addresses produce so little effect as during a revival. Before the times of refreshing come, an unusual spirit of hearing is frequently given, and the congregations are larger, and very attentive. When, however, the Spirit is poured out in an extraordinary degree, it often seems as if His direct influence on individual minds were so great as almost to supersede human instrumentality.

Singular phenomena presented in revivals.

But it is frequently alleged that the conduct of persons affected in revivals is so exceedingly strange as not to be reconcilable with reason or religious order. And it must be freely admitted, that many of the phenomena presented in a revival are most extraordinary, and in some cases unaccountable.

We remember the case of an agricultural labourer, during the revival in Cornwall in 1824. Whilst working in his master's field, and thinking of the revival of which he had only heard, he became deeply serious, and greatly concerned for his salvation. He first resolved to attend the neighbouring chapel in the evening. This, however, did not satisfy him; his trouble increased, until he could continue his labour no longer. He took his coat on his arm, and walked to the nearest chapel. He found some penitents on their knees in distress, and some experienced Christians praying with them, and encouraging them to believe in Christ. He paused, looked with deep interest

on the scene; then turning away, he said to himself, "I shall get no good there." He walked on rather more than a mile to the next chapel. There he found, in the school-room, a very similar scene,—penitents in distress, and persons praying with them. Again he paused; and again turned away with the same remark on his lips, "I shall get no good there;" and walked another mile to the next chapel. There he found a repetition of the two former scenes, and, after a little hesitation, said, "I must pray to God for mercy, and may as well begin." He went in, fell on his knees, and prayed most earnestly for pardon. His prayer was answered, and he returned to his home, a distance of nearly three miles, rejoicing in God. The case of this man seemed very strange to his neighbours at the time, and may appear unreasonable, and even ridiculous, now; although, if his feelings were fairly analysed, it might be found that his natural unwillingness of heart to submit to the Spirit of God, forms the key to his conduct.

The noise and violence in which some penitents indulge during their distress, have been much objected to. Yet it cannot be denied that this is compatible with true sincerity, and may not unreasonably result from deep inward feeling. We witnessed the case of a man who had been a great sinner and a prize-wrestler, a mighty man of strength, with a Herculean form. He, too, in one of these revivals, was brought to the foot of the cross, and prayed in agony of spirit. His struggle continued for two or three hours, during which he beat his knees through the flooring-boards so completely, that they were fairly broken, and had to be replaced. He found peace with God, and for many years evinced the reality of his conversion by a godly and consistent life. We know that this violent

action was altogether unnecessary; but when such a spirit is so deeply troubled, how is it to be restrained?

The gradual way in which deep conviction gathers over the mind, and the enduring manner in which mercy is sought after it has acquired intensity, forms a singular feature in the case of some who are brought to God in these revivals. A Cornish miner, a man of more than ordinary mental energy, who led a very wicked life for many years, hearing of a revival, went to the chapel, to see what was going on. He was careless and trifling, but attended regularly day after day, and witnessed the distress and prayers of penitents, and their transition into the experience of peace and joy. After a while he became thoughtful and grave; a deep gloom gathered over his countenance; and, after the lapse of several days, he requested the chapel-keeper to bring him a large jug of cold water. When it was brought, he said, "Take it into that pew: I have the hardest job to do that I ever did in my life, and which will take me some time." He stripped off his coat and neck-cloth, and, putting them aside, knelt down to pray. He wrestled earnestly with God; and, when quite exhausted, took a draught of water, and again resumed his prayer. He continued this course for six hours, without rising from his knees, when God spoke peace to his soul, and made him a happy partaker of divine love. The change—visible in his countenance—was seen and admitted by all. He proved its reality by a sober and godly life. He soon became very useful as a prayer-leader, and still more so, as the leader of a Class.

Yet, perhaps, the sudden conviction of persons at these times is a still more remarkable phenomenon than that just considered. Such cases have been very frequent. At the evening meeting of a revival,

two respectable young women, thoughtless, and full of gaiety, were looking on those in distress with apparent unconcern. One of them had made some trifling remark to her companion, who after a momentary delay looked round to reply, but found the speaker at her feet. She had suddenly fallen on her knees; in deep distress she began to pray for mercy, and ceased not until blessed with the pardon of her sins.

We give another instance illustrative of the mighty power with which grace operates on such occasions, and of the pious temper which it produces A strong, vigorous, and tolerably intelligent young woman was working at a mine in Cornwall. In company with many others, she was employed in breaking the copper ores with a hammer on an iron anvil. Mary—for that was her name—had heard of the revival in the neighbourhood, and turned all she had been told into ridicule, making herself and her companions exceedingly merry with the subject. She, however, had never attended any meeting, and consequently lacked the information necessary to give point and completeness to her profane jesting. This defect she resolved to remedy by going to the revival meeting in the evening, watching closely all that took place, and treasuring it up in her memory. She promised her companions to repeat all that was said, and mimic all the noises made, for their amusement the following day.

She went to the meeting, and for some time most carefully adhered to her plan, and enjoyed in anticipation the effect with which she should parody the scene on the morrow. But an arrow of deep conviction entered Mary's soul; she trembled; she felt the depth of her depravity and the magnitude of her transgressions; humbly and urgently she cried for mercy. She continued in earnest

prayer until just after midnight, when her mourning was turned into joy, and she was taken to her dwelling unspeakable happy in God.

In the morning, she repaired to her place at the mine, and commenced her labour; but how changed! Hoarse with recent crying, she could scarcely speak. Full of heavenly peace and love, she wanted no communication with her companions. She took her seat in silence, and nothing fell from her lips but a scarcely audible whisper, as she occasionally lifted her heart in thanksgiving to God. This mighty change attracted attention, and the girls about her soon guessed the cause. "Mary is converted," was whispered abroad. The strange intelligence passed to other houses, where women were similarly occupied; others came and looked on her; and, as they saw her sit in silence, with a heavenly smile on her lips and joy beaming in her eye, they retired, saying, "Yes; Mary is converted." At length, one young woman who had been intimate with Mary, and well knew her passionate fondness for finery, came, and looking on her said, "No; she is not converted: look at those fine large earrings in her ears still! If she had been converted, she would not continue to wear them." These words gave to poor Mary the first idea of the earrings, since the change had come over her mind. Without a word, she laid down her hammer, took the earrings from her ears, and placed them on the anvil. Resuming her work, she pounded them to atoms, and swept them away with the pulverized ore, humming the while,—

> "Neither passion nor pride His cross can abide,
> They melt in the fountain that flows from His side;"

then looking up, and saying, "Praise the Lord, they are gone." The effect on the spectators was irre-

sistible; the most incredulous withdrew their objections, and all agreed that "Mary was converted." Her future conduct fully justified the conclusion; for she lived a pious and devoted Christian.

The allegation that revivals are not permanently beneficial.

But it is alleged that revivals are, after all, not ultimately beneficial to the churches visited by them; that those so strangely and rapidly converted, soon abandon their profession, and relapse into their former courses. We are well aware that large revivals have been followed by the declension of many brought into Society by their means. But it has been too hastily assumed, that this proves the work of grace to have been superficial, or merely a pretence. A revival, such as we have many times seen, and which has been witnessed at various periods in different countries, is a great and unusual work of God, issuing in the sound conversion of many sinners to Christ. But it does not follow, that, because these persons have been brought to the experience of salvation in an unusual way, an equally uncommon measure of spiritual influence is to watch over and keep them in all their future course. The lambs of Christ's flock are committed to the elders and ministers of the church to be "shepherded" and trained up for heaven.

The case of converts not adequately met by suitable provision for their case.

We blush to confess that, in many instances, this has been sadly, very sadly, neglected. Adequate judgment and caution have been seldom used in placing such converts with suitable leaders, and in connexion with old and experienced Christians. Not unfrequently they have been grouped together by dozens in Classes, without a mature Christian among them.

Another grievous evil, often seen, is the neglect to make adequate ministerial provision for the great increase of members. We know of cases in which one thousand, one thousand two hundred, and one thousand five hundred members have been added to a

Circuit in a few months; yet no addition whatever made to the number of ministers employed. In one of these cases there was a small country Society which for many years consisted of a Class, ranging from ten to fourteen. These were stirred up to additional effort, and, after immense struggles, they raised a neat new chapel, capable of holding about one hundred and forty persons. Soon after the opening, a revival visited that Circuit; twelve hundred members were added to it in one quarter, and one hundred and twenty to this small Society. The number of ministers remained the same; consequently, the minister could only visit this interesting Society, as heretofore, once in the quarter, for the renewal of tickets! What efficient local oversight and aid could be rendered by the ten or twelve old members to one hundred and twenty converts? What fostering care could a minister afford in one visit every three months? Yet, if in those circumstances these converts evinced instability or unfaithfulness, their revival conversion would by many be regarded as superficial, if not, indeed, altogether a deception. It must be admitted by every candid Christian, that such a censure is unjust; the fault, in all probability, would not be in the manner of conversion, but in the subsequent neglect.

Notwithstanding this neglect, revivals have been beneficial.

Yet, although too frequently the fruits of revivals have been very insufficiently cared for, and consequently serious loss has been sustained, it is not true that these gracious visitations have produced no lasting good to the churches. It is proved by ample evidence, that the Circuits thus visited have increased in numbers far beyond the average of the Connexion.* Let attention be directed

* The Rev. Robert Young's "Showers of Blessing," p. 455. A very useful work, which contains much valuable and important information.

to one single case, of which mention has already been made. The numbers reported to the Conference in June, 1814, from the Cornwall Districts, were fourteen thousand six hundred and sixteen. These were taken but about three months after the great revival. Twelve months afterward the numbers were fourteen thousand two hundred and ninety-six; a decrease of a little more than two *per cent.* on the year. Now surely this is not an unreasonable decrease. As almost all who were within the range of Methodist influence were brought into the Society at this time, there was little material for evangelizing agency to act on; so that there is no proof whatever of any falling back. The decrease might be fully accounted for by the fact of the diminished numbers received into the Society not being sufficient to meet the ordinary loss from deaths and other causes. And surely the Christian stability of persons, after they have been members of a church fifteen or sixteen months, is not affected by the manner of their conversion.

Great advantages of them.

We may excite surprise and provoke opposition by the declaration; but after much experience in the working of Methodism, and in many revivals, we have no hesitation in declaring our full belief, that a larger proportion of persons brought into Society in revivals, when properly cared for, continue members to the end of their lives, than of those who join it in the ordinary way. We would rather trust the stability of the former than that of the latter for every religious purpose; because, in our judgment, a larger proportion of them are truly converted. No doubt, in almost every revival, many are superficially and sympathetically affected. Some of these may attend chapel, and, perhaps, meet for a while in Class; but not many continue to meet during their

three months on trial, and become accredited members of Society. In those who do, we have stronger confidence than in any equal number who become members in the usual and gradual manner. Nor can it be denied that many of the most zealous, self-denying, and useful ministers in Methodism have been eminently honoured as instruments in promoting and extending these revivals of religion.

But still some will ask, "What is the real good of these revivals? Is it not better for a religious community to go on steadily and gradually, in the experience of the divine life, and increasing in numbers and power?" Regarding this as an abstract question, we have no answer to make. We think it wiser to gather a knowledge of what is best from the revelations of the divine will in the word of God and in the operations of His grace, than from any mere inductions of our own reason. The history of God's work of grace among men from the beginning has been, in a great measure, a record of alternate religious declension and revival. And in Gospel times the Lord has given His church abundant proofs of His willingness to reveal His enlightening influence and saving power, in answer to believing prayer, to an extent far beyond what His people are generally prepared to admit. Instead, therefore, of adopting any language or conduct having the appearance of cavil, or opposition to any display of saving mercy, it far better becomes His church to inquire, with humble reverence, in what way they can more fully "become workers together with Him." If they see His arm made bare in convincing power or converting grace, let them prayerfully endeavour to husband the fruits of such gracious visitations, and to imitate Him who "will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax."

Importance of correct views and conduct in regard of revivals.

We dismiss this deeply interesting subject, with a feeling of regret that it has not been regarded by the Church of Christ with the attention, candour, and enlightened judgment which it merits. Not a few identify a revival with rant, extravagance, and enthusiasm, and therefore do not prayerfully seek, nor beneficially enjoy, those times "of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." Others, who do appreciate these visitations, and prayerfully and faithfully seek to participate in their blessing, have not always met the harvest of souls thus given with suitable liberality, diligence, and godly caution. Instead of regarding such displays of grace as claims for corresponding self-denial, and for providing spiritual culture for the souls so strangely gathered into the fold of Christ, joy has been sometimes felt that the increase of numbers will lessen the demand for the pecuniary contributions of older members. When Christian churches thus favoured rise above every sordid feeling, and labour fully to supply every increasing demand on their property, time, and abilities, and afford ample provision to insure for every convert the best possible religious oversight and instruction, we shall see the cause of God more abundantly prosper and prevail.

Revivals have wonderfully displayed the presence and power of God.

Whatever doubt may attach to our opinions and judgment on this subject in the estimation of our readers, we are certain, that we have never so fully realized deep and holy impressions of the presence and power of God to save, as in some of those seasons regarded by many as scenes of confusion and disorder. O, how gloriously has Jehovah revealed Himself! How fearfully has He displayed His wrath against all unrighteousness, and confronted the awakened sinner with all the terrors of judgment! And yet, at the same moment, how blessedly and graciously has He manifested Himself in pardoning mercy to the

broken-hearted, believing penitent! We can scarcely believe it possible for God to reveal Himself more marvellously in a world of material existence, than we have known it done in some of these seasons, when all classes of mind, persons of every age, men and women of every description of character, the pious and profane alike, have, with one accord, stood awe-stricken in the felt presence of the heart-searching God.

CHAPTER II.

ITS MISSIONS.

The Methodist Societies missionary in their spirit and design.

FROM the beginning the Methodist Societies were missionary in their spirit and design. They arose out of an experience of Christianity in its true and comprehensive character. They were formed, not on any geographical basis, but with a studied adaptation to carry the Gospel to all who needed it, especially to those who needed it most. Nothing that Wesley ever did, in the whole course of his eventful life, was a greater departure from the established principles, ideas, and conventional practices of the age, than the enunciation of the broad catholic maxim, "The world is my parish."

Principles and practice of Wesley respecting Missions.

The irreligious and immoral state of England, for some considerable time, absorbed the labours, energies, and thoughts of that apostolic man. Yet, when a necessity arose, and an opening was presented, true to the eminently Christian principles on which he always acted, although exceedingly limited in financial resources, and straitened for suitable agents to carry on the great work in which he was engaged, he sent Boardman and Pilmoor, in 1769, as missionaries to America,—a measure which has issued in the evangelization of a continent.

The same method was uniformly pursued throughout the whole course of Wesley's life. The missionary operations which then existed, were not initiated and carried on as a work separate and distinct from that at home, but as parts of the one great evangelical labour in which he was engaged. Hence, when Boardman and Pilmoor had

entered on their transatlantic toils, America was set down in the list of Circuits, as naturally as though it had been part of Cornwall or of Scotland. Nor was there any plan devised for prosecuting Missions as a distinct and settled purpose. Wherever openings were presented, or the cry, "Come over, and help us," heard, there, if possible, a preacher was sent. In this way Methodism was introduced into the Norman Isles, the West Indies, and a few other places, before its Founder was called to his reward. The result of these efforts was, that, at this period, besides the Methodists in Great Britain, Ireland, and the neighbouring islands, there were seven Circuits, thirteen preachers, and four thousand five hundred members, in the West Indies; four Circuits, six preachers, and eight hundred members, in British America; and ninety-seven Circuits, one hundred and ninety-eight preachers, and forty-three thousand two hundred and sixty-five members, in the United States. But as this latter country had been totally separated from British rule by the Declaration of Independence, the Methodist Societies there, although alway recognising Wesley as their head, became a separate and distinct church. There remained, therefore, at the time of Wesley's death, but eleven Circuits, nineteen preachers, and five thousand three hundred members, which really constituted the Methodist Missions.

Dr. Coke and the Missionary Committee.

It is rather a remarkable circumstance, that in the last Conference at which Wesley presided a Committee consisting of nine preachers, with Coke at their head, was appointed for the management of the West India Missions. The Doctor had for some years devoted himself, in a very special manner, to the Missions, and had begged from door to door, through different parts of the country, to raise funds for their support. It is impossible to say how much of the

Christian sympathy which still animates Methodism is the direct result of his earnest and simple, but very effective, advocacy of the religious interests of the heathen and the slave. He had seen the West Indies in the worst days of slavery, had heard the clanking of the chains, and his Christian and benevolent heart had done all that man could do, to gauge the amount of their misery, and to measure the extent of their claims on the justice and benevolence of Christian and charitable men. His simple tale of their wrongs, and of their need of the Gospel, although sometimes coldly and cruelly repulsed, was so extensively successful, that it produced a vibration of feeling throughout the length and breadth of the land, which we are persuaded has not to this day ceased to beat.

This agency was continued in operation. Coke was still relied on by the Conference, as the principal director of this important department of labour; and, to a great extent, as the means of procuring funds for its support; while the Committee served as a council to assist and advise with him, whenever occasion required. Justice cannot be done to the parties who had, for many years, carried on these missionary operations, and who now adopted these arrangements for their continuance and extension, if the time when these events took place, and the state of public feeling, be not taken into account. The appointment of this Committee was made in August, 1790, and the efforts which gathered these five thousand church members had previously taken place.

English literature unfavourable to missionary effort.

The country was exceedingly apathetic on the subject of Missions. The tone of the current literature was decidedly unfavourable. By the fascination with which it was invested, Keats's extravagant account of the Pelew Islands had led to the notion, that great numbers of the

heathen in lands unknown lived in a state of virtue and happiness. Nor had any great agency arisen to dispel the fatal illusion, and render the darkness of heathendom visible to British Christians. The Moravians had exerted themselves nobly, but their means were limited. The Baptist Missionary Society was established in 1792; the London Missionary Society in 1795; and the Edinburgh, or Scottish, and the Glasgow Missionary Societies in 1796. The difficulty which opposed the early Methodist efforts, unsupported and uncountenanced as they were, may therefore be readily conceived.

Nor were these difficulties at home the only obstacles with which Coke and his fellow-labourers had to contend. No sooner had the dawning rays of Gospel light been cast on the inhabitants of the West India Islands, through missionary effort, than the curse of slavery began to appear in all its hideous deformity. As early as 1792, Negro women in St. Eustatius were severely flogged for attending a prayer-meeting. And in January, 1793, Mr. Lumb, the missionary, was immured in a gaol in St. Vincent's for preaching the Gospel to the Negroes. When the state of society in some of these islands is known, this opposition to the truth, and cruel persecution of its teachers, will cease to be surprising. Ignorance, impurity, and licentiousness fearfully prevailed. Yet, wherever the Gospel could be preached, it became the power of God unto salvation, and from the most degraded and abandoned of human beings trophies were won to the Saviour, and souls were raised up to rejoice in the peace and love of God.

Notwithstanding the persecution and cruelty with which the missionaries and their converts were treated, occasions were not wanting to prove that they were loyal and devoted

subjects, and the best friends of the ruling authorities. In St. Vincent's a plot had been laid among the Negro slaves to unite in one general insurrection, and murder all the white inhabitants. Not long before this plot would have been ripe for execution, some intimation of the design reached a Negro member of the Methodist Society, who at once told the missionary, by whom the intelligence was conveyed to the governor, who, taking instant and decisive measures for the security of the island, prevented the intended massacre.

State of the Missions in 1800.

In the Conference of 1800, ten years after that to which reference has been made, further and extended regulations were brought into operation for the management of the Missions. A collection was ordered to be made in every chapel in the Connexion for their support; and it was positively enjoined that the mode of service, and all the distinctive features of Methodism, such as lovefeasts, &c., should be observed at every Mission station, as in England. There being a deficiency of missionaries, the chairmen of District Meetings were directed to make an annual inquiry in their respective Districts, whether there were any suitable local preachers willing to offer themselves as candidates for the work. The numbers reported, although not large, yet showed a cheering progress. There were now thirty missionaries and thirteen thousand six hundred and sixty-seven members in the West Indies and British America, —an increase of eleven preachers and eight thousand three hundred and sixty-seven members in the ten years. It will be seen, that the additional agency is very disproportionate to its success. While the preachers are only increased about one-third, the number of members is much more than doubled:—a proof that God was going before His people in this good work.

Missionary progress in the ensuing ten years.

In the ensuing ten years Coke's unremitting diligence and activity to strengthen the missionary band succeeded to some considerable extent, but without much improving the prospects of the Missions. The most formidable difficulties opposed their progress. The war with France was carried on vigorously in the West Indies. Some of the islands were invaded; and the movements of the missionaries were much impeded. But the greatest difficulty arose from the intolerance of the colonial governments, who repeatedly silenced the missionaries, shut up chapels, prevented even local preachers and leaders meeting for worship. Congregations which it had taken years of labour to gather, were scattered; and Societies which had cost large sums of money, and even missionary life, to raise, were ruthlessly destroyed. So terribly did these causes operate, that in 1810, although the number of missionaries was increased from thirty to forty-three, the number of members was reduced from thirteen thousand six hundred and sixty-seven to thirteen thousand five hundred and eighty.

State of the Missions in 1810.

We do not regard such an issue as a failure. During this decade many hundreds of Negroes, converted to God amid slavery, persecution, and torment, were guided by this blessed agency to the end of their course, and safely lodged in Abraham's bosom. Notwithstanding the unfavourable influences by which they were surrounded, thousands had received religious instruction and consolation, while many more had been turned from sin to righteousness, supplying the vacancies occasioned by the removal of those who had died in the faith, or of others who had been turned out of the way. This, indeed, does not satisfy us. With increasing efforts and enlarged agency, increase and progress are reasonably expected; and it is painful to con-

template the prevention of such success by the wicked, cruel, and intolerant opposition of men calling themselves civilized and enlightened Christians.

Great changes introduced into the missionary economy.

A great change now came over the whole system of the Methodist missionary economy; a change, pregnant with important results to the Church and the world, brought about and consummated in the most remarkable manner. From the beginning, Coke had been the directing genius of this evangelistic department. He had never ceased to take a deep interest in the general concerns of the Connexion, but it was to this object especially that his laborious life was chiefly devoted; and, as the general superintendent of the Missions, his mind and judgment held paramount sway. Yet, it must be admitted, that this whole work was carried on without any proper system. A Committee and an annual collection had been appointed; but Coke's periodical itinerant begging was an important element in procuring supplies, and this mode of raising funds was neither likely to be permanent nor satisfactory. The whole of the executive authority and arrangements were such, that a great and successful extension of the Methodist missionary agency could scarcely be hoped for, whilst the work was conducted and sustained in this manner.

Although these defects were generally perceived, few could suggest the means by which any effective improvement could be introduced. By his piety and labours, Coke had so endeared himself to the whole Methodist community, that no thought could be entertained of superseding him in the direction of the Missions. And, without this, it appeared next to impossible to effect such a renovation in the management and mode of operation, as would meet all the requirements of the case. The condition of the country was also peculiarly unfavourable for any great

change, or important enterprise. England was at war, we might almost say, with all Europe and America. The extent of Napoleon's power and resources had become immense, and this country, determined to resist them to the utmost, was carrying on the struggle at a tremendous cost of life and money. Yet, strange to say, at this juncture, circumstances occurred which induced the Methodist community to undertake Missions of greater magnitude and importance than before, and to commit the honour and resources of the Connexion to the evangelization of the world to an extent far transcending all previous thought. What is still more remarkable, the same circumstances led to a complete and effective renovation of the missionary economy, by placing the greatest talent and judgment in the Connexion on its directorate, and by associating the religious principle and Christian feeling of the whole community with its support and extension.

The consequences of Dr. Coke's Mission to India.

The means which wrought all these important results were as strange and remarkable in their nature and character, as in their consequences. They were nothing less than the determination of Coke, at the age of sixty-six, to undertake in person a Mission to Asia, and to devote his life and fortune to the conversion of India. The motives which induced this remarkable course, and the manner in which it was carried into effect, have been already narrated. We direct attention to them now for the purpose of showing the important effects which followed, in the improved organization, support, and direction of this great work.

When Coke obtained the sanction of the Conference of 1813, to his proposed Asian Mission, he was, as he said, "dead to Europe, and alive for India." It became necessary therefore to devise means to supply the vacancy

thus created in all respects. As the Connexion had, by this measure, incurred serious additional responsibility, the first and most urgent want was increased financial resources. Hence the formation of District Associations, and the appointment of public missionary meetings. The promptitude with which these institutions were called into vigorous and effectual action, is a sufficient proof that we have not misconceived the nature and extent of the previously existing necessity; and, also, that we are not mistaken in believing that it was keenly felt. No endeavour was made to supply the place of Coke, by the appointment of another general superintendent. There were other ministers of age and experience, men of popular talents and address, who were not deficient in zeal and energy; but no one of them was sought out to supply the place of Coke in raising funds for the Missions. The old plan of begging and governing had fairly died out; it was obsolete; and nothing remained, when these remarkable circumstances made a change inevitable, but to re-organize the whole framework of the Methodist Missionary Institutions, and to secure a more enlarged and effective method of obtaining pecuniary supplies.

Manner in which the requisite changes were introduced.

This was not done in any summary way. Methodism has never been distinguished for action of this kind. No meeting of the magnates of the day was summoned; no formal legislation was devised; nothing in the way of organic change, or sudden transition to a new economy, was heard of. The case was dealt with in a purely *Wesleyan* manner. Ministers of the greatest ability, and laymen of the highest station, knowledge, and experience, consulted together as opportunity offered; and it was resolved to hold a public meeting at Leeds, to initiate a Missionary Association for that District. As already

stated, this was done with a success beyond the most sanguine hopes of its projectors.

Mr. Bunting's action at Leeds.

Jabez Bunting was the moving and directing spirit of the great experiment at Leeds. He fairly grappled with the difficulty, and solved the problem. Considering all the circumstances of the case, we do not know a more striking instance of moral courage in Methodist history than he displayed, when, as others recoiled from the responsibility, he said, "If no one else will be a fool for Christ's sake, I will." But, having committed himself to this course of action, he was supported by the most talented, pious, and useful of the ministers and people. The Methodists of the present day, however, must not suppose that this movement was made without its promoters encountering the chilling blast of opposition and gloomy despondency. We well remember the sad forebodings of many "timid spirits." "The simplicity of Methodism was to be destroyed by these meetings. They were carnal and worldly. They never could be maintained. The reaction would be fearful. In a word, they were a device of the devil to mar Methodism in all its agency."

Opposition to missionary meetings.

Their great practical benefit.

How does the history of their progress laugh these gloomy forebodings to scorn! What institution of ancient or modern times has been productive of equal religious, moral, and intellectual benefit to the world? As to the direct bearing of these meetings on Missions, who can estimate the amount of information they have communicated? The state of the heathen world has been investigated, and its moral and religious necessities ascertained, as far, at least, as boundless darkness, depravity, and danger can be defined. Sound religious and philosophical views of man, in all the varieties of his species, and in all the possible conditions of his nature in relation to God,

have been extensively circulated. Correct scriptural doctrines respecting the religious duty of Christian men to send the Gospel of Christ to every human creature on the earth's surface, have been urged with ability and success. The author well remembers having exerted himself to enforce these views on a missionary platform, many years ago, in the presence of that excellent, eminent, and deeply lamented young minister, the Rev. Richard Treffry, Jun. After the speech was finished, he said, "I quite agree with you. I fully believe it is the duty of all Christians to do something towards sending the Gospel to the heathen; but I fear the Methodist people are not yet ripe for the reception of such sentiments. I fear we must submit, for some time longer, to plead this cause on the score of charity." That intelligent and amiable minister was a good judge of the state of the Connexion, and might have been correct in his opinion; but, if so, cheering progress has since been made. You might now travel through the length and breadth of Methodism, and not find an intelligent person doubting the propriety of urging missionary exertion as a Christian duty.

More than this has been done by these meetings. Geography, history, and religion have been expounded, and general knowledge communicated, to an almost unlimited extent. A school for public speaking on religious matters has also been established, which has been of immense benefit. But the greatest general utility has been found in the weight and importance thus given to the cause of Missions. The highest intelligence, the most brilliant imagination, the most fervent piety, and the greatest weight of Christian character, which the Connexion can boast, have all been consecrated to this grand object. Who has not felt a deeper interest in this holy enterprise

from seeing associated with it the profound mind of Watson, the masculine eloquence of Newton, the subduing pathos of Lessey, the brilliant vehemency of Beaumont, or the dramatic oratory of William Dawson? The splendid gifts and acknowledged excellence of the advocates, while deriving additional lustre from their connexion with such a glorious cause, have imparted to our appreciation of it a weight and importance we should otherwise never have felt.

The organization of the Missionary Society carried on gradually.

Although we value so highly the great improvements introduced into the home economy of the Mission work, and mark with delight the rapidity with which Missionary Associations were formed in every District in the island, we do not represent the organization thus happily begun as complete. The men who introduced these measures knew well the magnitude of their work, and the great importance of making every advance with such foresight and caution as never to have occasion to retrace their steps. They proceeded by gradually developing the sound principles which had been laid down, and adding to existing regulations, until they found themselves possessed of sufficient information and experience to place the Methodist Missionary Society in a fully organized and complete form before the Connexion and the world, in the year 1817. As our present volume does not extend to that date, we must defer a full account of these final arrangements to a future occasion.

Meanwhile, progressive improvements were introduced and brought into operation, mainly under the direction of Jabez Bunting, Richard Watson, and a few able coadjutors. A great step was made towards the organization of the Society in 1815, when a series of regulations were placed on the Minutes "for the future management of those important concerns." An Executive Committee was

appointed, consisting of the preachers stationed in London, and the two general treasurers, to superintend the Missions and the missionaries during the intervals of the sittings of Conference. A Committee of examination and finance was also appointed, to consist of the president and secretary of the Conference, the two general treasurers, and those other members of the Executive Committee who could attend, nine other travelling preachers, and nine other respectable members of Society, "not being itinerant preachers." This was an important step in a right direction, afterward very largely followed, under the same auspices, in this and other departments of Methodism.

The state of the Missions in 1815.

The wisdom and vigour manifested in the management of the Society's internal economy, was extended to the operations abroad. Missions were formed or invigorated in France, Gibraltar, Sierra Leone; at the Cape of Good Hope, and in Ceylon; in addition to the old established stations in the West Indies and British America. At the Conference of 1815, the total number on the several Mission Stations was nineteen thousand eight hundred and eighty-five, an increase, over the numbers of 1810, of six thousand three hundred and five. During the decade from 1800 to 1810, there was a small decrease in the number of members; but in the following years there was an increase of above six thousand three hundred. The younger Missions did not add much to this increase; and it is indeed the more gratifying, that the increase in the West Indies and British America constituted above six thousand of the number. And what was still more encouraging, at the close of the period now under consideration, the Missions in those countries presented a more healthy and prosperous aspect than at any previous period.

There were less persecution and opposition, and more encouraging signs of success.

The Missions prosecuted with great vigour and success.

The new Stations presented an equally interesting appearance. At that day especially, when the public mind was full of recollections of the horrible barbarism and cruelty of the Kaffirs, and of apprehensions respecting the pestilential climate of Africa, and when India had been so recently laid open to missionary enterprise, there was a boldness, and even a grandeur, in the attempt to locate Methodist ministers in every quarter of the globe, and to preach Christ to Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. The energy evinced in the prosecution of the Mission to the East was most praiseworthy. Although the eminent and honoured originator and leader of that attack on the old, and long impregnable, fortress of idolatry and superstition was taken to his reward, the Methodist preachers and people claimed his bequest of the daring, expense, and labour of the work, as his executors in trust. Hearing of the favourable reception of the missionaries in Ceylon, the Conference sent out six additional men; and at the time when our present narrative ceases, the places of the missionaries removed by death had been supplied, the Mission to Ceylon had been strengthened, and means provided to open a way for the Gospel into Continental India, through Bombay and Madras.

Increase in Mission funds.

The stimulus given to the Mission cause toward the close of this period, is seen in the fact, that "during the year ending February first, 1814, the regular income of the Methodist Mission fund was £6,820. 2*s*. 6*d*.; and, by means of an extraordinary public collection for the purpose of paying off arrears due to treasurers, a further sum of £2,464. 7*s*. 4*d*. was raised. A considerable part of this amount was applied to the spread of the Gospel in the

more neglected parts of England and Wales, under the name of Home Missions. In consequence of the establishment of District Societies, the holding of missionary meetings, and employment of collectors, the Report of the following year states that the sum raised for missionary purposes was £9,554. 4*s*. 4½*d*.; and, during the period extending from August eighteenth, 1815, to June, 1816, the sum of £10,423. 10*s*. 9*d*. was raised by the friends of the Methodist Missions, and placed at the disposal of the Managing Committee." *

The Mission cause, as presented in the Report for 1816.

The following extracts from the Report—the first written by Richard Watson—presented at the last-mentioned date, expresses the views then entertained of the work, and the manner in which they were placed before the public :—

"The favourable reception of the missionaries sent to Ceylon, the successes of their early labours, and their earnest entreaties for additional help, in order to avail themselves of those opportunities for promoting the cause of Christ, which in every direction presented themselves, had given a new impulse to the missionary zeal of the Methodist Societies and congregations. They saw that Methodist Missions had a providential designation to the eastern, as well as to the western, world; whilst the additional light which was thrown on the wretched condition of the millions of Asia by the communications of the missionaries, had more deeply awakened their sympathies, and kindled more ardent desires to make known to them the grace and salvation of the glorious Gospel.

"The lamented death of the late Rev. Dr. Coke had itself heightened those feelings. The work in which his soul had greatly delighted, and in the prosecution of which

* Jackson's "Life of Watson," p. 200.

he died, seemed to derive new interest from those retrospections to which the contemplation of his life, character, and labours necessarily led; and his loss, whilst it dictated the necessity of the exertions of the many to supply the efforts of one, diffused the spirit of holy zeal with those regrets which consecrated his memory.

"The formation of Missionary Societies, and the meetings held for that purpose, had also a large share in awakening a deeper and more general concern for the conversion of the heathen. Missions to various parts of the world had long been conducted by the Methodist Conference, and supported with great liberality; and the West India Mission, in particular, stands a noble monument of the faithful labours of the missionaries, and of the liberal support they met with at home; but by the operation of those Societies the deplorable condition of the heathen was more fully displayed, the motives for the exertion of Christians were enforced, and the encouraging prospects of success in this great cause unfolded. Persons of all ranks of society had offered their service of time and money, and plans were adopted which promised a permanent and increasing supply for the support and enlargement of those benevolent undertakings, by which alone the blessings of Christianity can be fully communicated to mankind.

"The hopes which these circumstances excited in the Committee have not been disappointed. Success, in different degrees, has crowned the labours of the missionaries; a number of suitable young men have devoted themselves to this department of the work of God; the attention of the Committee has been called to new and important Stations of great promise; the liberality of the public has enabled the Committee considerably to increase the number of missionaries; and the spirit of Christian

zeal which animates the bosoms of the numerous friends of the Methodist Missions, expanded and corroborated as it is by the spirit of prayer offered with increased ardour, and more direct reference to the success of Missions, promises that permanence of principle, and activity of operation, which must issue, under the continued blessing of God, in the diffusion of the knowledge of Christ, with all its train of blessings, civil, religious, and eternal."

CHAPTER III.

METHODIST LITERATURE.

The Wesleyan literature of the preceding period still in circulation.

In treating of the literature of the preceding period in our first volume,* we were almost wholly limited to the publications of Wesley himself, and the sacred poetry of his brother Charles. We now have to consider the works of their sons in the Gospel, and of the people raised up through the labours of the Methodist preachers. It must not, however, be forgotten, when we estimate the literary privileges of the Methodists during this period, that, although we cannot recount the productions of the Wesleys, the most important of them remained on sale, and might be had on application to any of the Methodist preachers. They were, therefore, continued in extensive circulation. In forming our estimate of the Methodist literature of the present period, we shall begin with the stock on hand at the close of the preceding era, and then consider the principal productions of Methodist authors during the twenty-five years over which the present volume ranges.

"The Methodist Magazine."

We must first notice the official literary organ of the Connexion,—the "Magazine." This periodical was begun by Wesley in 1778, under the name of the "Arminian Magazine,"† principally for the purpose of asserting and defending the doctrines of "general redemption." After his death, until the Conference of 1804, George Story was the editor; then this important

* See Vol. i., p. 651, *et seq.* † Vol. i., pp. 411, 654.

office was intrusted to Joseph Benson. It appears to have been Story's object, during the time the "Magazine" was under his care, that it should continue as nearly as possible in the same state, and maintain the same character, as in Wesley's time. To a very considerable extent he succeeded, and preserved to the Connexion an interesting and instructive religious miscellany.

When Benson entered on the editorship, he immediately planned many important changes, and announced a new series, under the title of "The Methodist Magazine." After the lapse of half a century, the plan which he introduced appears old and strange; but it was, nevertheless, regarded at the time as a great improvement. In announcing these changes, he intimates that "many of the more intelligent members" in "different parts of the kingdom, as well as the preachers assembled at the last Conference," had "expressed an earnest wish" that greater efforts should be made to render "our periodical work" more edifying to the "many thousands of families and individuals, especially the rising generation." He then announces his proposed alterations, and urges the claims of the periodical upon the attention of the preachers and the Connexion generally.*

The principal improvement consisted of a more systematic arrangement of contents. He classified the various miscellaneous materials which were available, and presented them under several separate heads, such as "Biography," "Divinity," "The Truth of God defended," &c. Benson had some personal advantages over his predecessor. He far excelled him in sound scholarship and enlightened judgment. The periodical accordingly prospered in his hands. With these improvements the "Magazine" had an exten-

* Advertisement stitched in the "Magazine" for December, 1803.

sive circulation, and exercised a most salutary influence on the Connexion, and far beyond it.

Commentaries on the Bible.

In directing attention to the important part of Methodist literature produced by individual labour, learning, and enterprise, we notice, first, Commentaries on the Scriptures, —publications justly held of vital importance to every denomination of Christians. The preparation of a work of this sort requires great learning and devoted industry, and its publication involves considerable financial risk. Few, therefore, except men of acknowledged erudition and established character, have dared to undertake the preparation of a Commentary. Considering the class of men likely to enter the Methodist ministry, especially at this period, no disappointment could be felt had there not been among them one man capable of such an undertaking; while, on the other hand, the character generally ascribed to the Methodist people of that day, as being ignorant, and not given to reading, would lead to the impression that, if a man competent to the preparation of a Commentary should have been found in Methodism, he would have met with no encouragement for the publication of so laborious and expensive a work.

Yet, notwithstanding these most unpromising appearances, during the twenty-five years now before us, two Commentaries were prepared and published by Methodist preachers, and two others considerably advanced, all enjoying a very extensive sale. This fact must be regarded as very extraordinary by all persons, especially by those who form their opinions of Methodist preachers and people from current reports, rather than from actual knowledge and personal acquaintance. It becomes our duty to give some account of these voluminous works.

The first was the Commentary published by Dr.

Dr. Coke's Commentary based on that of Dr. Dodd.

Coke. The history of this undertaking is not, perhaps, generally known. At the London Conference of 1792, the Committee of the Methodist Book Room, "being of opinion, that a critical and more copious comment on the Sacred Writings, would be highly useful, in addition to the laconic comment, with which the late Rev. Mr. Wesley had favoured the world," desired "Dr. Coke to prepare for the press a Commentary on the Bible." Anxious to "serve the church of Christ, and especially the Methodist Connexion," he immediately commenced his task. The publication, in monthly parts, began in January, 1800, and ended in 1803. The Doctor was no volunteer in the sacred work, neither did he profess to produce an entirely original publication. He examined "with deep attention both the critical and spiritual commentators, choosing those which he believed to be the most excellent; and from them compiled the present Commentary. It may easily be perceived from hence that he has only been like the bee, culling honey from every flower." *

But, notwithstanding this frank avowal in his original prospectus, the Commentary is usually spoken of as substantially a republication of Dr. Dodd's Commentary; and Coke has received some censure for not acknowledging whence he had derived the larger part of his materials. We neither join in the condemnation, nor undertake the defence of the Doctor in this matter; but, if fully written, the *secret* history of Dodd's compilation would be exceedingly curious. Much doubt rests on his literary proprietorship in the materials employed. He states on his title-page, that he has inserted "the notes and collections of John Locke, Esq., Daniel Waterland, D.D., the Right Hon. Edward Earl of Clarendon, and other learned

* Cover of "Wesleyan Magazine," January, 1800.

persons." The leading part of this statement, however, is erroneous. What are called the notes and collections of Locke, which seemed to have formed the basis of the work, were not written by him, but by his contemporary, the learned Dr. Ralph Cudworth, author of "The True Intellectual System of the Universe," whose daughter was married to Sir Francis Masham. She and her husband invited Locke, who was one of her father's friends, to accept apartments in their country seat at Oates, Essex. He spent a great part of the last fourteen years of his life in that healthy retirement, and died there in 1740. Locke found in Lady Masham, who inherited the profound talents of her father, "a friend and companion exactly to his heart's wish, being of a contemplative and studious complexion, and particularly inured, from her infancy, to deep and refined speculations in theology, metaphysics, and morality." A descendant of this excellent family came into possession of many valuable manuscripts; and, not having the faculty to discern their great merit, sold them, in 1762, to Davis, a bookseller in Piccadilly, who from some circumstances supposed them to have been written by Locke; but the authorities at the British Museum, on comparing the handwriting with that of Locke, subsequently discovered the mistake of Dodd and his publishers. About the same time some manuscript notes by Waterland fell into the hands of the booksellers, who, possessing what they regarded as a marketable commodity, set about devising the best means of turning it to account. It was necessary to have the name of a living celebrity, united with those of the eminent dead. Dodd was then in the height of his popularity, and was selected to carry on the undertaking. With the materials provided to his hand, and with the help of Calmet, Houbigant, and of the most eminent com-

The materials of which the latter was composed.

mentators of our own country, he produced a work, of which Adam Clarke said, that, regarded "as giving the true sense of the Scriptures, it is by far the best comment that has yet appeared in the English language,—by far the best of these works which might be said to be *published by the yard.*" *

The trial and execution of Dodd for forgery did more to prevent the circulation of his Commentary and to cast it into obscurity, than his previous character had done to raise it. Coke, however, perceived its intrinsic merit, and undoubtedly made it the basis of his own. We do not say that, under the circumstances, the Doctor was entitled to regard the annotations bearing Dodd's name as lawful plunder, after the manner in which every succeeding lexicographer has regarded the great work of Dr. Johnson; but we do think that, as Dodd's work was avowedly a compilation of matter, most of which had been written a hundred years before, Coke was not bound to regard it as if it had been the actual production of Dodd. The alterations, retrenchments, and additions made by Coke cost him much labour and anxiety. The work was deservedly well received, and had an extensive circulation.

Benson's Commentary. Its character.

The next Commentary of which we have to speak, was written by the Rev. Joseph Benson. The Conference of 1809 requested Benson to write notes on the Bible, and in the beginning of October he entered on the task. But, when noticing this fact in his journal, he refers to the Book Committee as intending to publish notes written by an eminent divine in the Connexion, and adds, "If they do, I shall not proceed with mine, and shall be eased of a task too great for me to undertake at my time of life." The utmost that Benson then intended, was short notes for

* General Preface to the Commentary.

family use. The first portion was, however, received with so much favour, that the subscribers urged him to proceed with a regular Commentary; and the ensuing Conference uniting in the same desire, he devoted himself to the arduous task. Its publication began in 1811, and was completed in 1818, in five quarto volumes. A competent authority calls it "an elaborate and very useful Commentary on the sacred Scriptures, which (independently of its practical tendency) possesses the merit of compressing into a comparatively small compass the substance of what the piety and learning of former ages have advanced, in order to facilitate the study of the Bible. Its learned author was distinguished for his critical and exact acquaintance with the Greek Testament."* This eulogium was richly merited. The Commentary is throughout highly respectable, and in some parts, particularly the New Testament and the volume on the Prophetic Books, eminently excellent. Notwithstanding all that has since been done to promote biblical science, if we were now to be shut up to one Commentary, we know no one that we should prefer to Benson's.

Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary.

A third Methodist Commentary, commenced during the period now under consideration, was the well known production of Dr. Adam Clarke; the first public announcement of which was dated August first, 1799;†

* Horne's "Introduction," vol. v., p. 297. Ninth Edition.

† "In great forwardness for the Press, (and to be published with all convenient speed,) a faithful and (as nearly as possible) literal Translation of the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, taken from Professor Griesbach's very accurate Edition, and collated with most of the ancient and modern Versions. With a Commentary, in which all the principal Words in the original Text are analysed and explained; the most important Readings of the best MSS. noticed; the peculiar Customs of the Jews and neighbouring Nations, alluded to by our Lord and the Apostles, explained from

but its publication did not begin till 1810, a year before Benson's, and was finished in 1826, eight years after that had been completed, in eight quarto volumes,—five containing the Old Testament, and three the New. Hartwell Horne says of it, "The literary world in general, and biblical students in particular, are greatly indebted to Dr. Clarke for the light he has thrown on many very difficult passages."

The judgment of Dr. Etheridge respecting it.

The eminent author of the recent biography of Dr. Clarke thus speaks of him as a commentator: "Most English Commentaries are reducible to two classes. Some are drily critical, without being popular; others popular, without being critical. Now Dr. Adam Clarke seems to have entertained the idea of producing a work which should combine the advantages of both classes; sufficiently critical to aid the inquiries of the more serious student, and yet sufficiently popular to serve the purposes of general edification. It was his purpose to give a lucid view of the several books of Scripture, as to their dates and authors, their scope and connexion; to expound the text in a manner to adapt itself to the deficiencies of the English reader; to elucidate difficulties in chronology, history, and Oriental manners; to develope the grand doctrines of revelation, and apply the whole to the great concerns of human salvation and duty.

Asiatic Writings, several of which have never been published in Europe; the great Doctrines of the Gospel of God defined, illustrated, and defended; and the whole applied to the important Purposes of sound practical Christianity and vital Godliness.

"By Adam Clarke.

"N.B.—In this work the common version is intended to be printed in a parallel column with the new translation, that those who prefer the former may have the opportunity of applying the Commentary to it.

"The work will make two volumes in quarto."

"To the accomplishment of this task he brought qualifications which proved his designation to it by the providence and grace of God: strong and expansive powers of intellect; an almost universal erudition; a faith of the heart, inwrought by the Holy Spirit whose words he sought to interpret; and a resolute will, which bore him up in body and mind, from year to year, till the great labour should be completed. The seven gifts which, according to Augustine, the true expositor of Scripture must possess,—reverence, piety, science, fortitude, prudence, cleanness of heart, and heavenly wisdom,—the Lord had vouchsafed him in blessed degrees; and by the diligent improvement of them, in this and the other endeavours of his devoted life, these graces increased with his years. He was moved also by a conviction of his responsibility. He heard the voice of God." *

Dr. Clarke laid a solid foundation for the preparation of this great work by first translating the whole Bible into English. The Greek portion occupied him eleven months, and the Hebrew and Chaldee about fourteen months; both being accompanied by extensive notes and memoranda. The work, in our estimation, passes rather beyond the limits of Commentary, and almost assumes the character of a biblical Cyclopædia. The amount of knowledge it embodies is diversified, extensive, and exceedingly valuable. The great fault of commentators in general is copying from predecessors. We have not unfrequently consulted half-a-dozen Commentaries in succession on a given text, and found four or five of them with the same exposition, so nearly in the same words that the common source whence it was derived was at once apparent. Dr. Clarke was neither ignorant of what had been done by preceding writers, nor

Character of the work.

* Dr. Etheridge's "Life of Dr. Adam Clarke," p. 320.

inattentive to their productions; but he was no servile copyist. His whole work is characterized by strong independence of opinion and judgment. This gave his Commentary many important excellencies, and a few glaring defects. We glance at two or three instances which we regard as of the latter class. His notes on the Prophets and Apocalypse are meagre and unsatisfactory. His exposition of the *Nachash* in Genesis excited much opposition, and has not made many converts. His clear and beautiful exposition of the strict and proper authority of the Septuagint translation, which merits the highest praise, should have led to the adoption of its chronology; but, this department having been confided to his son, the abbreviated system is adopted in the body of the work. The exposition of the texts referring to "the Eternal Sonship" will require notice hereafter. The adoption of Dr. Taylor's "Key to the Epistle to the Romans" as the basis of the Commentary on that book, called forth an exceedingly eloquent and powerful discourse from the Rev. Henry Moore, on "The Design, Fulness, and Blessedness of the Epistle to the Romans," preached before the Conference at Manchester, in 1815. Dr. Clarke's Commentary was, from the first day of publication, eminently successful. Ten thousand copies on common, and one thousand on fine, paper were printed as a first edition. Successive editions have since been issued, and we doubt not that this great work will continue to edify and enlighten the church to the end of time.

Sutcliffe's Commentary.

Another Commentary from the pen of the Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe, M.A., has had an extensive circulation. The notes are mostly select and brief, but embody the results of much careful reading, especially of the works of eminent French expositors and divines. The principal feature of

the work is the beautiful and somewhat extended Reflections at the end of each chapter. In many of them it is as if we heard an angel tongue descanting upon the holy themes relating to the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ.

Extensive sale of these Commentaries.

The preparation and extensive demand for four Commentaries of this magnitude in the Methodist Connexion is highly creditable, especially when it is considered that all the other English Commentaries published during these twenty-five years, taken together, were inferior in magnitude, and had a smaller circulation than the aggregate of these four. The Rev. Thomas Scott's Bible, the most popular of the period, except those issuing from Methodist authors, passed through three editions in the time; but these did not exceed seven thousand copies. Certainly, in this most important department of religious literature, Methodism did more than any other religious denomination in the kingdom.

This evidences, at least, that literature was not, as had been alleged, proscribed by Methodists. It may, indeed, be said, that the fact of four of the ministers having proved themselves able commentators does not prove that the rest of their brethren had similar tastes and abilities. Nor is it intended to convey the idea that these were a fair sample of the Methodist preachers as a body. But when the extent to which these productions were purchased and appreciated, and the fact that the authors were highly honoured for their works' sake, are taken into account, the case indicates the approval by the Methodists generally of sound learning, and evinces their strong desire to avail themselves extensively of useful biblical exposition. Of course, the sale of these works was not confined to the Connexion, but was very extensive within its limits.

We greatly desire to give some correct idea of the nature and extent of the literary productions of Methodist authors during this period: but the task appears all but impracticable. It is the opinion of one who has the good fortune to possess a complete set of the Magazines, with all the covers and advertisements bound up just as the numbers issued from the press, that they amount to near fifteen hundred. We have reason to believe that at no distant day a perfect list of all works, great and small, published by Methodist preachers, will be given to the world. Meanwhile, all we can now do is to notice a few of these literary efforts.

Works on biblical criticism and exposition by Drs. Clarke and Townley.

Next to Commentaries, we regard works on scriptural criticism and exposition. Here we have no formal treatise of great extent or importance, but numerous contributions of considerable merit and utility. We may notice Dr. Clarke's "Bibliographical Dictionary," in six volumes, published A.D. 1802–1804; supplemented, two years afterwards, by his "Bibliographical Miscellany," in two volumes. These publications contain much useful and recondite information on classical and biblical subjects, communicated by a scholar who had seen and handled the greater portion of the works which he so well described. The "Dictionary" gives a succinct account of Bibles in various languages, Polyglot Bibles, and especially Greek Testaments. It enumerates the places where the principal Polyglots were prepared, the persons by whom they were executed, with various peculiarities relating to each. The researches respecting the London Polyglot, prepared and published by Bishop Walton in 1657, under the protectorate of Cromwell, are remarkably ample. Immediately after the Restoration, the reference to the Protector was withdrawn; and various alterations were made in the preface, which Dr.

Clarke particularly specifies. The account of the New Testaments is also learned and useful. But still more valuable, in our estimation, is the author's Review of Holmes's "Greek Testament and Septuagint" in the "Eclectic." The biblical student will find here some valuable observations on the discrepancies existing in the Hebrew, Samaritan, and Septuagint versions of the Old Testament, with remarks on the authority of the Septuagint, and the necessity of an acquaintance with it for a correct knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures. Dr. Clarke's learned remarks in the "Eclectic Review" on Barrett's "*Evangelium secundùm Matthæum*," and on Graves's "Lectures on the Pentateuch," will be read with advantage.

Near akin to these subjects are those discussed in the "Succession of Sacred Literature," by Dr. Clarke; and Dr. Townley's "Biblical Anecdotes." The first gives an account of the writers on sacred subjects, and of their works, to the year A.D. 345. It therefore speaks of the writers of the Old Testament books, and of the apocryphal pieces printed with many copies of the Scriptures,—of the Masorites, Onkelos, Philo-Judæus, Jonathan ben Uzziel, and Josephus, and the other Hebrew and Greek writers on cognate subjects to the time of Christ. The New Testament writers are next considered, and then the fathers, to the middle of the fourth century. The information may now be found in expensive and very erudite works, in a much more complete and, in some cases, more correct form than it appears in this small and unpretending volume. Yet, this was a most important contribution to biblical literature fifty years ago. The same may be said of Townley's "Biblical Anecdotes," afterward expanded into three goodly volumes, under the title of "Illus-

trations of Biblical Literature;" and of which the "Eclectic Review" said, "They afford a more comprehensive view of the progress of biblical translations, and of the literary and ecclesiastical history of the Holy Scriptures, than is to be found in any other work."* What was really a second edition of the "Biblical Anecdotes," was afterwards published, in a handsome volume, under the title of "An Introduction to the Literary History of the Bible."

Dr. Clarke's translations and new editions of important works.

Dr. Adam Clarke rendered further aid to the cause of biblical knowledge and sound religious learning, by translations and new editions of important works. Among the former, we have the Abbé Fleury's "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Israelites." Clarke's edition of this volume was based on a translation made in the seventeenth century by a Mr. Thomas Bedford, and published under the name of "Ellis Farneworth, M.A.," and not then very well received by the public. Clarke, however, did not satisfy himself with merely correcting the translation; he enlarged and enriched the treatise from the fruits of his own learning. "For the third and best edition the public are indebted to Dr. Adam Clarke, who has enlarged the original work with much valuable information from the principal writers on Jewish antiquities." †

Sturm's "Reflections" were also, for the first time, given in a complete and correct form to the English reader by the same indefatigable author. This was a very interesting and useful work, communicating an extensive knowledge of sound philosophy, of natural science, and of the providential government of the world, in a very agreeable man-

* "Eclectic Review," New Series, vol. xviii., pp. 386-407.

† Hartwell Horne.

ner, adapted to lead the mind to recognise and adore the Author and Upholder of all things. As works of this class become obsolete unless they are, from time to time, imbued with the progress made in general knowledge and scientific discovery, Dr. Clarke brought up this edition of Sturm to the scientific status of his day. As he could not procure the original and complete German edition, he translated from a French version, collating with the best German copy he could procure.

Dr. Clarke also prepared a new edition of "Observations on various Passages of Scripture," the production of Thomas Harmer, a pious Dissenter of Norwich, first published in 1764 in two volumes, to which two more were added in 1784. The object of the work was to illustrate Holy Scripture by the selection of apposite passages from voyages and travels in eastern countries. This, like the preceding, was a work requiring the frequent incorporation of fresh matter, as the lands of the Bible were more fully explored during the forty years which elapsed from the first publication of the book to the issue of Clarke's edition in 1816. Of the additional information thus collected, the editor fully availed himself, and sent forth, what is admitted by every authority to be, the best edition of the "Observations." Dr. Clarke also corrected a new edition of Shuckford's "Connexion of the Sacred and Profane History of the World."

Thomas Wood, another Methodist preacher, produced an important work in 1813, entitled, "The Mosaic Creation illustrated by Discoveries and Experiments derived from the present enlightened State of Science: to which is prefixed the Cosmogony of the Ancients. With Reflections intended to promote vital and practical Religion." This volume fully redeemed the promise of its title-page. It is

an elaborate illustration of the first chapter of Genesis. A short Introduction gives a view of the cosmogony of the ancients, which exhibits considerable research. The religious improvements are both natural and evangelical; the doctrine of the Trinity is scripturally defended, and its authorities are clearly adduced.

Nearly allied to these, is another class of biblical aids, to which the Methodism of this period was not indifferent. There is a very useful "Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names," by James Creighton; "A Concordance to the Holy Scriptures," by Thomas Taylor: a second "Concordance," compiled indeed by the Rev. John Butterworth, but edited with great care by Dr. Adam Clarke; and what surprises us most of all:—"A Concordance to the Holy Scriptures, compiled by Alexander Cruden; *revised by* Mr. Jabez Bunting: 4to., price, bound in calf gilt, £2. 8*s*." * There was also a very useful "Biblical and Theological Dictionary," in three volumes, prepared by Miles Martindale, and "corrected by the Rev. Joseph Benson;" and another "Biblical Dictionary," by James Wood. These various works formed a respectable contribution from Methodism toward the promotion of biblical science, at a period when the subject was not so popular, nor so generally studied, as it has been in more recent times.

Publications in defence of Scripture doctrines.

The great doctrines of Christianity were defended and illustrated both from the evidence of Scripture and by philosophical argument, in works which, if not very numerous, took a highly respectable position amongst writings of their class. Benson's replies to Priestley merit distinguished notice, for their spirit, conclusiveness, and conciseness. They were, "Remarks on Dr. Priestley's System of Materialism and Necessity;" "A scriptural Essay toward the

* Cover of Wesleyan Magazine for December, 1816.

Proof of an immortal Spirit in Man;" "A rational Vindication of the Catholic Faith. Being the First Part of a Vindication of Christ's Divinity;" "Socinianism Unscriptural: or, The Prophets and Apostles vindicated from the Charge of holding the Doctrine of Christ's mere Humanity: being the Second Part of a Vindication of His Divinity." The two last-mentioned were begun by the Rev. John Fletcher, of Madeley; but, being left incomplete at his death, they were, at Wesley's request, revised and finished by Benson.

Daniel Isaac's "Easay on Universal Restoration," in reply to Vidler, has been already mentioned, and may be named again with commendation, as scriptural and conclusive. Benson passed a high eulogium on it; and Clarke pronounced it "unanswerable." In connexion with Andrew Fuller's able "Letters" on the same subject, it forms a full and sufficient answer to all the Winchesterian notions.

Nor must we omit the productions of Samuel Drew, M.A., the lay author of the middle age of Methodism. His principal works, already mentioned, are, "Remarks on Paine's Age of Reason;" "An Essay on the Immateriality and Immortality of the human Soul, founded solely on physical and rational Principles;" and, "An Essay on the Identity and general Resurrection of the human Body."

Circulation of tracts and pamphlets having a similar tendency.

These works, with others of a similar tendency, did much to uphold the cause of righteousness against the errors and pride of philosophy and "science falsely so called," and to maintain the truth as revealed in holy Scripture. But they form a very small portion of what Methodism contributed during the period to this important purpose. Formal treatises in support of the truth, and in opposition to error, are sometimes absolutely necessary, and very useful. It is, however, but seldom that an opposer of the truth assumes

such colossal proportions as to render such a mode of defence necessary, or that the circumstances of the people enable them to purchase large and expensive works of this character. This was certainly not the case generally with the Methodists of this period; and consequently the most effectual way of repressing error, and extending the influence of religion, was by tracts and pamphlets. And these, written generally with correctness and ability, literally swarmed from the press. The sermons of Benson, Bunting, Watson, Clarke, Bradburn, Moore, and others, with pamphlets in countless numbers, contributed very greatly to extend knowledge and religion.

Works in defence of Methodism.

One important portion of this sort of literature was directed to the defence of Methodism. It was the "sect everywhere spoken against," and every hand seemed raised to assail it. Nor were its sons backward to "meet the enemy at the gate," and to give to every one that asked them a reason of their hope. Benson's "Apology for the People called Methodists," was a masterly production, on the plan of the Apologies of the early Fathers. The same author's Letters to Tatham are also excellent; and Samuel Drew's reply to Polwhele's "Anecdotes of Methodism," and no less than eight admirable productions by Edward Hare, merit honourable mention in this category. But the greater number of the pieces were small, and of temporary interest, passing away with the opposition which gave them birth.

History.

We might refer to a respectable, and not a very limited, number of works, produced by Methodist authors, of a general and historical character; such as, Dr. Coke's "History of the West Indies;" Atmore's "Memorials," containing biographical sketches of the first race of Methodist preachers; Drew's "History of Cornwall;" Myles's "Chronological

History of Methodism," "A comprehensive Martyrology," by Richard Reece, and many others: but our limits forbid further enumeration. We proceed, finally, to direct attention to Methodist biography, and religious experience, a class of works which has exercised a most important influence on the Methodist Connexion, and on the present age. They were to a great extent a creation of Methodism, and may be termed "the Methodist school of biography." Their peculiar and distinctive feature is the prominence given to what we may call the biography of the soul. In genera biography you have the portraiture of the character, life, and actions of persons, as seen by their fellows, passing on the highway of life. Their conduct is submitted to the public eye, and judged of accordingly. In Methodist biography, although a fair measure of attention may be paid to this outside history, the principal thing is the progress of an inward and spiritual life. While growth from youth to age, and the conduct as a member of a family, and as a citizen of the world, are made the principal topics in general biography; here the great object is to exhibit the means by which the fallen, depraved, and guilty spirit awakes to a sense of its danger, and is translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and to portray the life and actions of the man as a member of the family of God, and a denizen of heaven.

Works on religious biography and spiritual experience.

The number of these biographical works, published in every period of Methodist history, is immense. Coke and Moore's "Life of Wesley;" Benson's "Life of Fletcher;" the "Experience of Hester Ann Rogers;" the "Life and Labours of John Valton;" the "Life of the Rev. Peard Dickenson;" and a hundred others, might be mentioned. We have said, we regard this portion of Methodist literature as peculiarly important; we esteem it, in fact, as the

clearest, brightest, and best public proof of the continued existence of spiritual life among us; and as affording, in its collective form, guidance and defence to every sincere soul athirst for salvation. In this department of literature, Methodism is rich. The Methodists of the present day can review the convictions, struggles, self-denials, and spiritual exercises of the early preachers and the Methodists of former ages, and see through what opposition and conflict they endured hardness as good soldiers. They can consider the godly conversation of their predecessors, and copy their example, that they may share their final glory.

During several years of this period, there was also regularly issued a small "Annual," called "The Pocket Companion." In addition to the usual Almanack information, it contained "a suitable Scripture for every day," and "a Hymn adapted for every Sunday;" "places of worship, and times of preaching in the Methodist London Circuit;" short memoirs of pious members of the Society recently departed; divers "godly letters," and various Connexional information. Each number was "ornamented with a beautiful engraving," generally the portrait of one of the preachers. No doubt, this attempt to "cater" for the Connexion in this particular line of literature was most praiseworthy; but the project, revived with happier success in our own days, ultimately expired for want of sufficient patronage.

Conclusion.

On a careful and candid review of the whole case, although convinced that the Methodist people have no more right than they have inclination to pride themselves on being a literary or learned people, we think that they have reason to be grateful to the great Head of the church that He has from the beginning raised up among them a continued succession of men, not only wise to win souls by their Gospel ministrations, but who have also been

endued with ability to repel error in its most insidious forms, to uphold the truth against all opposition, and, by the divine blessing, to make a fair contribution toward the religious, moral, and intellectual enlightenment of the human family.

CHAPTER IV.

ITS RELATION TO THE CHURCH AND THE NATION.

Object of the chapter.

The circumstances and condition of Methodism at the death of Wesley, and its progress during the ensuing twenty-five years, have passed under careful review. The troubles which followed the removal of the Founder of the Connexion from the scene of his earthly labour, respecting the sacraments and the polity of the Connexion, have been thoroughly considered. The progress and general history of the Connexion, from 1791 to 1816, have, as far as our limits allowed, been succinctly detailed. We are now prepared to form a judgment of the Methodism of the Middle Age. To what issue are we then brought? What is the character of the Methodism of this period? We desire nothing more, in the closing pages of this volume, than to elicit a sound, reasonable, and religious reply to these questions.

For the formation of a correct judgment on this subject, it will be necessary to direct attention to some prominent features in the progress and development of Methodism, and to survey more particularly the several phases of its character. We shall not confine ourselves to a consideration of Methodism as an isolated institution, but regard it also in its relation to the Established Church and the nation generally.

Methodism retained its spiritual character and evangelizing energy.

The first point to which we invite attention is, that, to the end of the period under consideration, Methodism retained its spiritual power, and continued an instrument of evangelization.

This was, indeed, its original and principal vocation. Wesley was learned, conscientious, zealous, when making efforts for the moral and religious improvement of the young men at Oxford; and not less so, when he went to preach the Gospel to the colonists and Indians in Georgia. But it was not until he learned the way of justification by faith alone, and realized this blessed truth in his own experience, that he became the honoured instrument in turning many to righteousness. Having believed with his heart unto righteousness, he preached Christ crucified, as the power of God unto salvation, with zeal and success. Thenceforth, to the end of his days, the Methodist preachers were acknowledged, even by their bitterest enemies, to be eminently useful in the conversion of the most abandoned and degraded sinners. Their efforts had, indeed, "roused a slumbering church and nation to a sense of God and religion."

The men who tell us that Methodism had then accomplished her providential work, and consequently ought to have fallen back into the bosom of the Establishment, should carefully consider whether it still continued to prosecute the same course of evangelical usefulness, or turned aside to some other way. Unfortunately, the latter has not been an untrodden path. Painful as it is to contemplate the case of an individual who, having begun a course of godliness, has turned again to the pleasures of the world and sin; it is infinitely more so to watch the backsliding of a church. Yet, how often has this melancholy spectacle been seen in every age of the world! Churches full of godly truth, zeal, and usefulness, through which the saving power of the Gospel was communicated to thousands, have departed from the faith, and become mere receptacles of empty forms and superstitious ceremonies: or, they have

learned to idolize human reason, and at length denied the Lord that bought them.

Proofs of this fact.

Proofs of the fact that Methodism retained its spiritual power and evangelical energy have been furnished in the preceding pages. We know not what to add to the evidence, undesigned and spontaneous as it is, which a simple record of events has supplied. Does it prove the evangelical character of a church, that it raises men from the lowest deeps of ignorance and sin, to be not only consistent Christians, but able ministers of the New Covenant?—while, at the same time, it reaches men of giant intellect and exalted mental powers, inducing them to renounce all the fascinations of wealth and fame, and submit to be humble ministers of the cross of Christ? Methodism bore these marks. Does it show the spiritual and evangelical character of a religious community, that it offers to its members motives of piety, and consolations of religion, which sustain and animate them through all the trials and dangers of this sublunary course, and enable them to die happy in the faith and love of Jesus, exulting to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better? Methodism exerted this influence in every part of the land, and through all classes of society, from the brightest specimens of Britain's aristocracy to the meanest and lowest of her people. Would it be regarded as conclusive evidence of retaining a truly scriptural character, that a church was regularly and uniformly made the instrument of leading a considerable number to the experience of saving faith in Christ, and the happy enjoyment of pardoning and renewing grace? Methodism continued to do all this. In no period of its history did the conversion of sinners, the character of its ministers, and the happy and triumphant deaths of its people, more fully display the continued pre-

sence and saving power of Christ, than in the period now under review.

Methodism continued to increase in numbers and influence.

Another consideration of importance is the continued progress of Methodism in numbers and influence at home and abroad. Had these been secured by any abandonment of principle, by any adaptation of the economy to worldly policy, or by any sacrifice of its spirituality, this progress would afford no proof of its continued evangelical character. But its religious efficiency was maintained; and its principles and economy were equally preserved inviolate. Indeed, this was the occasion of the far greater portion of the conflict which the Methodism of that day was called to maintain, and of the persecution which it suffered. Had they been willing to succumb to the power of the great, or the clamour of the many; had those who directed the affairs of the Connexion consented to forego their principles, and to depart from the practice and spirit of Wesley; they might have avoided much inconvenience, and even suffering, and have secured many worldly advantages. But, instead of this, as far as possible, in the altered circumstances which his death produced, they steadily adhered to the spiritual and evangelical course which the founder of Methodism had marked out.

Unfavourable state of the country.

Yet Methodism continued to increase and multiply at home and abroad. We cannot estimate the importance of this fact, unless we refer to the state of the country and of Methodism during this period. Casual reference has more than once been made to these topics in the course of the history; but it is necessary that, in this *résumé*, it should be repeated. Never before, in the modern history of Europe, did any country present such an arena of conflict between light and darkness, revealed truth and infidel error, as did Britain during this time. When Wesley died,

royalty was in abeyance in France, and all the external forms of religion were virtually destroyed. A deep and deadly current of infidelity was rolling on, loosening the foundations of civil and political society, and working ruin to religion. A short time sufficed to complete the political, social, and religious destruction in that unhappy country. The royal family, the nobility, the church, the very form, name, and appearance of religion, were swept away in a torrent of blood. Anarchy and infidelity united their malign influences to blast and destroy all that was venerable in the state, or sacred in the land.

In the first movements and successes of this revolution many Englishmen largely sympathized. Nor did its carnage and monstrous cruelty entirely destroy this feeling, at least for a time. These circumstances exercised a fearful influence on the faith and morals of England; and Methodism had to bear up against this unusual and baneful excitement. Nor must it be forgotten, that Methodism itself was ill prepared for such a struggle.* It had not been fairly wrought into a system; its organization was neither complete, nor free from defects. Yet, even in these circumstances, it prospered. And we can scarcely find any religious community reporting a more steadily progressive or larger increase. That, in twenty-five years, the number of Methodists in the British islands should have trebled, is a remarkable fact. These members required and obtained a corresponding increase in the number of ministers and chapels. The former, indeed, multiplied in proportion more rapidly than the members; and we incline to the opinion, that this is true also in respect of the chapels. These measures required a very large investment of capital. At the close of the period, therefore, we feel bound

Remarkable accession of numbers to Methodism.

* See *ante*, p. 212.

to recognise Methodism as one of the great institutions of the nation.

The Missions.

The *status* which the Missions had obtained, also greatly contributed to increase the influence of Methodism. The long and laborious efforts in the West Indies had brought the Methodist preachers so frequently into contact with the colonial governments, as well as with the imperial authority, that the work was recognised with honour at home and abroad. More recent enterprises in Africa and Asia were also, from their public and prominent action, under the eye of all observers, and contributed to render the Connexion better known and more highly appreciated.

Development of Methodism.

But Methodism had not only increased since the death of Wesley, it had largely developed its ecclesiastical arrangements and church character. The sacraments were now regularly administered by Methodist preachers. The members of Society were therefore favoured with all the ordinances of a Christian church. They had the word of God faithfully preached, and the sacraments duly administered; and through the divine blessing on these means, they were edified and multiplied. Some persons still persist in speaking of this change as a wide and rebellious departure from the precepts and practice of Wesley. It is vain to argue with obstinate cavillers, or to attempt to remove predetermined conclusions. Every candid person will readily admit that we have properly designated these changes, when we call them a development of Wesleyan Methodism. Wesley did not desire his preachers, whom at first he regarded as mere laymen, to administer the sacraments; but years before his death he appointed some of them for this special duty, not only in America, but also in England and Scotland. Why was this? For what purpose were these arrangements made, at least for England, and yet held in abeyance,

for ulterior action when required? This question, which seems to present inextricable difficulties to many persons, admits of a very ready and simple solution. Wesley desired the Methodist preachers and people, at least during his life, to remain in strict union with the National Church, and generally to receive the sacraments from the hands of the established clergy. But the religious interests of the people, to whom the providence of God had made him a spiritual father, was the one object which always held paramount sway in his mind, and exercised an influence on his judgment superior to every other. That these interests might be protected in every possible emergency, he ordained Mather, Rankin, and Moore presbyters for England. And that we have accurately apprehended his design in this act, appears from the fact, that, having ordained these preachers, he solemnly charged them "that, according to his example, they should continue united to the Established Church, *so far as the blessed work in which they were engaged would permit:*"—words which fully sustain the view we have taken, that attention to the religious necessities of this "blessed work" was to be ever regarded as their first duty.

In the administration of the sacraments.

That the ministration of the sacraments under certain possible contingencies was regarded by Wesley as essential to those interests, he clearly showed by appointing persons to perform this duty, when the necessity arose. This necessity did arise. The Methodist people, in many places, became so numerous, that the churches could not contain them, had they been even reserved for their special accommodation. The conduct of the clergy generally, and the judgment and feelings of the Methodist people, offered equal and insuperable difficulties. The necessity which Wesley had provided for—although struggled

against as long, and even longer, than was either wise or safe—having arisen, the point was conceded, and the sacraments administered by the Methodist preachers. The arrangements which led to this conclusion, were, therefore, a development of Wesleyan Methodism,—a consummation for which ample provision had been made by its Founder himself.

It may, indeed, be urged, that the object was not accomplished precisely in the way that the arrangements of Wesley indicated. He ordained preachers as presbyters, and one of them as a superintendent or bishop. For some time toward the close of life, he seems to have entertained a design of introducing into Methodism a modified form of episcopacy, in case the appointment and recognition of a regular ministry should become inevitable. But he did not live long enough to learn, that, when this time did arrive, the plan could not be carried into effect in the way he intended without destroying the equality, unity, and brotherhood of the Methodist preachers. The appointment of bishops was canvassed for some years in various forms, and under every aspect of the question; but it was found to be opposed to the judgment of a large majority, and otherwise impracticable.

Nor did this departure from Wesley's ideal plan at all affect the issue. Under any circumstances, the sacraments would have been administered by Methodist preachers with no higher authority than the call of God and the church, and the designation which the Founder of Methodism had bequeathed to them; and this they had. Whether they were called deacons, presbyters, and bishops, or preachers on trial, superintendents, and chairmen of Districts, could make no difference whatever in their authority to perform religious or ecclesiastical acts. Ample reasons have been

already given for regarding a Methodist preacher as a valid Christian minister; it is, therefore, unnecessary to argue that question here; and it is undeniable, that the form of ministerial appointment at that time was the most modest and inoffensive course which could have been taken, whilst it did not in any way derogate from the scriptural character of the ministry.

But, while we fully maintain these positions, we must not be understood as setting aside the formal ordination of men, by the imposition of hands, to the office and work of the Christian ministry. When this is done in a simple, unostentatious, and religious manner, we regard it as useful and important; but we do not think it so essential in all cases, that a person received by the church and its ministers in another way, cannot be, really and truly, a Christian minister.

We believe that many of the Methodist preachers of the period under consideration entertained the opinions just expressed; and regarded the preachers, received as they then were, as scriptural ministers, fully authorized to administer the sacraments, to exercise complete ministerial authority, and to perform all ministerial acts. Yet we are strongly persuaded that, at the same time, they believed that ordination by the imposition of hands was not only scriptural and reasonable, but a very desirable mode of designating ministers to the sacred office.

"Why, then, was this form of ordination not adopted?" Because, in the then divided sentiments of Methodist preachers and people, it was feared such a step would be injurious. The Conference, while conceding to the claims of the people all that in its belief could be reasonably or scripturally demanded, claimed for its members all that was necessary to the fulfilment of the duties of their office

as ministers of Christ. Having done this, they delayed the adoption of reasonable and proper usages, forms, and names, as long as there was any danger that their introduction would produce serious differences of opinion, or other injurious consequences. For this reason the ceremony of the imposition of hands was postponed, and the preachers declined to adopt the terms "minister" and "reverend," contenting themselves with the modest title of "preacher of the Gospel," while they freely applied the appellation to other ministers.

Voluntary humility of Methodist preachers.

The development of which we have spoken, was carried so far as to constitute Methodism a church, and its preachers scriptural Christian ministers; but it was not carried far enough to give them the *apparent* position which they really occupied, nor to invest them with the name and title to which they had a just claim. This voluntary abandonment of their just rights, this contented occupancy of an apparently inferior position in comparison with other ministers, was persevered in for more than twenty years by those who have often, in our day, been described as ambitious men, grasping at power, eager and anxious to monopolize elevation and distinction! Where, in the records of the church, is there another instance of equal humility and self-denial on so large a scale?

Development in respect of the lay element.

Before passing from this consideration of Methodistic development, we may briefly allude to its operation in regard to the lay element, and its influence on the Societies. A very singular alteration took place during the life of Wesley, although it was scarcely recognised. When he commenced his itinerant labours, and for a long time afterwards, himself and the other ordained ministers of the Established Church were the only recognised *clergy*. The preachers were lay preachers, in common with the local

preachers, leaders, and people. In process of time, however, although he never placed his preachers on a level with clergymen, he challenged for them all the rights of Christian pastors, and called on the people to regard them as such. This anomaly was a prominent element in the struggle which took place in the Connexion after his death. By slow but steady progress, the preachers stood before the church and the world as ministers, and occupied a position distinct from the laity.

The question then arose, "What are the scriptural rights of the laity, and by what means are they to be secured?" This question was not, indeed, formally propounded; but in substance it formed a prominent element in the troubles which followed the death of Wesley for at least seven years. Had it been fairly considered, its solution would possibly have hastened the development which it took a long time to bring about. But instead of raising this question, an effort was made by the trustees to lay hold of the power to appoint preachers to the chapels, or, at least, to exercise a *veto* on their appointment. This attempt to encroach on the scriptural rights of the pastorate was, after a long and earnest struggle, decided in a manner which secured to Methodist preachers the powers necessary to enable them to discharge the functions of Christian ministers.

The rights of the laity not fully ascertained.

But this decision did not exactly define the strict and proper rights and influence of the laity in a Christian church. Much less did it profess to award these rights to the laity of that day. The local preachers, leaders, and stewards had secured to them the full amount of power pertaining to their respective offices; and, as the principal duties of the office-bearers in Methodism are strictly religious, and not political or legislative, the grand work of

the Connexion was carried on with vigour and success. But there still existed a marked deficiency. The scriptural idea of a church is evidently a unity of clergy and laity "working together" for the general good, with an ultimate authority and responsibility resting in the ministry. The decisions of 1795 and 1797, while securing to the Methodist ministry the possession of this right, and affording the laity a wide range of religious usefulness and influence, did not give the latter the means of co-operating with the ministry in the general affairs of the Connexion, and of influencing its legislation to the extent that the circumstances of the church and the teaching of holy Scripture required.

This necessity was felt, and its inconvenience deplored, by many, preachers and laymen; but nothing was discovered which offered a satisfactory and practicable remedy. And, therefore, throughout this period of Methodist history, the progress of the Connexion, although religiously great, was not all that could be desired. As the interests of Methodism acquired magnitude, and its action began to be felt throughout the world, the necessity of a full and more formal co-operation of the laity became increasingly essential to the healthy working and continued progress of the system. Yet things remained substantially in the state in which they had been placed in 1797, until towards the end of the time now under consideration. It then entered into the mind of Jabez Bunting, that the case might be met by the appointment of mixed committees, of an equal number of preachers and laymen, which should exercise special oversight over every department, and initiate such improvements, from time to time, as might seem necessary. Improvement devised.

The plan was not brought into operation at that point of Methodist history with which the present volume

closes; but it was just introduced in the formation of the Missionary Society, and was afterward carried into every part of the economy. We will not further anticipate the discussion of the important results which followed this, and other means afterward adopted, than to express an opinion, that they were essential to the continued enlargement and development of the Connexion. There never could have been a celebration of the Centenary of Methodism, with such results as that which took place in 1839, without the previous introduction of more official intercourse between the principal laymen and preachers, and a larger infusion of the lay element into the deliberations and decisions on the general affairs of the community.

State of the Connexion at the close of the middle age.

The result of our inquiries, therefore, is, that Methodism during this whole period was in a state of development. Adhering to all the great principles which guided Wesley in his work, the Connexion had defined and established the scriptural position of the pastorate, and charged it, in addition to the proclamation of the Gospel, with the administration of the sacraments, and thus put itself before the world as a scriptural church. But it had not placed either the preachers or the laymen, to the fullest extent, in their proper position. The former had not assumed the title or *status* of Christian ministers, and were in several respects without the accessories which ought to belong to the clergy of a great and influential section of the church universal. The laymen had not been introduced by suitable organization into such official influence as all the interests of the church required them to exercise. But, notwithstanding these defects of form, we perceive that the Connexion went onward in its aggression on ignorance and sin, and in building up believers in the faith of Christ, with unexampled energy, devotedness, and success.

Relation of Methodism to the Established Church.

In inquiring into the relation which Methodism, at the close of its middle age, bore to the Established Church, we, of course, recognise the facts previously mentioned; namely, that Wesley began his evangelical labours with the hope and desire of reviving religion within the Establishment; that he gathered the fruits of his ministry into Society; sought the aid of lay preachers; built chapels; and even introduced a financial organization for the purpose of sustaining these preachers. Still he hoped that all these results would ultimately be recognised by the national ecclesiastical authorities, and be retained as a leaven of righteousness within the pale of the Establishment. Events occurred in his subsequent history, especially toward the end of his life, which greatly damped these hopes. And as he regarded the maintenance of the work of God as a primary duty, he made provision for an emergency which, to him, seemed looming in the distance, by ordaining preachers for England, as he had previously done for America and Scotland.

What Wesley dreaded actually took place. The character of the clergy, and their conduct toward the Methodists, and the views and feelings toward the National Church which extensively prevailed amongst the Methodist people, made it fully apparent, after the lapse of some years, that no effective religious union could be maintained between them. Although many preachers and people earnestly desired to remain in connexion with the Establishment, the current in the opposite direction was so strong and broad, that it became irresistible, and compelled provision to be made for supplying the Methodist Societies with all Christian ordinances by their own preachers.

This was regarded at the time, and is still spoken of by

The continued union of Methodism with the Church impossible.

many, as a great evil. Some, even of those who fully admit the necessity of the separation which took place, deeply lament it, and labour much to discover who was really to blame for provoking such a catastrophe. We adhere to the opinion previously expressed, that the continued existence of the Methodist Connexion as a separate and independent religious community was the divine purpose in raising it up, and that no efforts would have succeeded in frustrating that design. But, waiving this, let us calmly inquire whether that consummation, of which some speak so earnestly, was really to be desired. It is assumed as an undeniable truth, that the Methodist Societies could not be maintained in continued union with the Church, unless placed to a considerable extent under the direction of the national clergy. Whatever Wesley might hope in the early part of his career, experience has given to this postulate the authority of established fact.

Then we ask any evangelical Christian, however strongly attached to the Episcopal Church, whether he really believes that if, in 1795, the Conference, instead of granting the sacraments to their people through the preachers, had made arrangements by which the Societies should be placed under the influence of the established clergy to such an extent as to secure their continued union with the National Church, this measure would have been more promotive of real religion than the course which was taken. Let the character of the clergy of that day be fairly considered, and let any candid Christian say whether such a course would have been the means of raising up in the Church a greater aggregate of piety, evangelizing energy, and religious power, in the year 1816, than the Church and Methodism together possessed at that period. We do not

wish to offend, by any minute canvass of the question; but to us it seems self-evident that, instead of promoting the religion of the country, such a course would have struck the heaviest blow, and presented the greatest discouragement to it, that was ever inflicted.

The separate existence of Methodism advantageous to the Church.

We are prepared further to maintain that the separate and independent existence of Methodism has afforded greater aid to the Establishment than any union of Methodism with it could have given. In order to justify this opinion, we must direct attention to two or three particulars.

Let it, then, be observed, in the first place, that if Methodism exists in separation from the Established Church, it is not constitutionally hostile to it. The Methodists believe the same doctrines; they have not, generally speaking, any conscientious repugnance to its ritual; they assert no principle opposed to that of a National Establishment; and, as a community, entertain no feeling towards the Church of England but that of friendly regard. If the Church has been assailed, Methodism has never been found in alliance with the assailants. With that kind of Dissent which would blot the Establishment from the institutions of our country, or deprive it of its revenues, Methodism has never evinced sympathy.

Secondly, the independent position of Methodism gives value to its opinions and support. This is no unimportant consideration. Let the circumstances of the time now under review be taken into account,—the fearful prevalence of infidelity; the extent of political dissent; the vantage ground on which those stood who attacked a church institution endowed by the state; and then let the importance of the favourable judgment and friendly aid of a community so numerous as the Methodists be fairly weighed.

Nor is this mere hypothesis. This aid has been often given, and has been sometimes suitably acknowledged.

Special proofs of this.

Further, Methodism has helped the Established Church in a peculiar, we might almost say a vicarious, way. It has been assailed,—several times furiously and desperately assailed; has been agitated and convulsed by disaffection and aggression. Superficial observers may attribute these conflicts to faults in the system, or in its administration. We will not now deny that, to some extent, there may have been both; but we maintain that the intensity and extent of these assaults bear no proportion even to the faults which have been alleged; while they stand connected with circumstances which cast important light on some of the real causes of the aggression. When has there been a wide-spread revolutionary mania affecting Europe, without its nearly synchronizing with a violent assault on Methodism? Let the reader look over the records of the Connexion, in comparison with those of England and the neighbouring nations, from 1790 up to the present time; and he will find this statement remarkably verified. The solution of this strange problem is simple and easy. When the public mind is in a sound and healthy state, discipline can be exercised, and suitable arrangements in Methodism be made, without stir or confusion. But when the public mind is deeply imbued with a feverish and revolutionary opposition to authority, then just and proper discipline is resisted with effect, if not with success. And this resistance has more than once manifestly acquired intensity and popular support from a deep-rooted opposition to the institution and authority of the Christian ministry, excited and strengthened by the circumstances of the times. In this manner Methodism has frequently sustained a storm of popular fury, which,

had it not been spent on the Connexion, would have fallen with fearful effect on the Established Church. Dissenting churches are too isolated and local to present a sufficient object of attack; but Methodism, from its connexional character, its maintenance of ministerial authority, its opposition to all low, licentious, levelling political notions, presents itself as a natural object of assault, whenever the public mind is imbued with a democratic frenzy. It has thus sustained the great principles of truth and order, and preserved the Church of England from much aggression which it would otherwise have had to endure.

What, if the innumerable public meetings, speeches, placards, appeals of the press, and other violent efforts directed against Methodism in successive agitations, had been all brought to bear immediately on the ministers, tithes, and institutions of the Established Church? How would such aggressions have been resisted? We well know a certain locality, where the Methodist people were harassed and disturbed during one of these agitations. A clergyman, otherwise highly respectable, greatly sympathized with the aggressors, and in various ways gave them tacit encouragement. The storm was sustained, passed away, and was by mere spectators almost forgotten; when this clergyman, speaking to a Methodist gentleman, observed, "I am much surprised and grieved to perceive the change that has come over the people in this parish during the past few years. When I came here to reside, and for years afterward, I was treated with marked respect by all, even the poorest of the people; and those who never attended church, seemed pleased to show some sign of deference to the minister: but now I find these classes almost uniformly regard me rather as an object of aversion than of respect." "Have you any idea

of the cause of this change?" asked the Methodist. The clergyman declared he had not, and much wished to know whether his acquaintance could give him any information respecting it. "Yes, Sir," said the Methodist, "I can tell you. That violent aggression on the peace and order of the Methodist Societies with which you sympathized some time since, has produced the effects which you lament. That aggression, Sir, was not made merely on a Methodist rule, or an act of the Conference, as you and many others seemed to suppose, but on the position and authority of the Christian ministry. And when one section of Christian ministers are libelled and lampooned so extensively that the censures and jests are retailed in the cottages of the poor, and by the lips of children, the end aimed at is in some degree attained,—the Christian ministry is damaged, and sinks in public estimation. Under such aggressive influences, distinction is not made between one denomination and another, but the whole order suffers." The clergyman considered the case, looked over the circumstances in this aspect, and candidly admitted that he believed the statement was correct. Were it possible for one of these furious aggressions to hurl Methodism from existence, the Church of England would not much longer remain a national institution.

We regard Methodism, therefore, as holding a friendly and respectful bearing towards the Establishment; as contributing a wholesome stimulus to her internal piety and activity; as forming an outlying army of defence, prepared to receive the first attack of every aggressor; and, as such, we hold that it has a claim to be regarded in return with friendliness and respect.

But it will probably be urged in reply, that the Methodism of this period cannot, on the acknowledged principles

of the National Establishment, be regarded as a Christian church, inasmuch as, in addition to the absence of episcopal ordination, it was actually destitute of the sacraments, an admitted essential in the constitution of the Christian system. This allegation, however, is hardly correct. The members of the Methodist Society in London had the sacraments always regularly administered, and this was frequently the case in some other places. But not to dwell on this point, we doubt the wisdom of members of the Church of England who urge this objection. To what does it amount? The terms of her own Article on the subject are these: "The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." *

Now it is argued that, although in a few places the sacraments were administered to the Methodist Societies, this was not uniformly the case, and therefore they cannot be recognised as a Christian church. But has it never occurred to persons so objecting, to ask whether at this very time the other branch of the requirement was uniformly found in the Church of England? Was "the pure word of God preached" in all the churches? No enlightened Churchman will maintain this. It is matter of history, that while in very, very many places scarcely anything worthy the name of Christian doctrine was preached, in others the errors of Arianism were proclaimed, and the atonement of the Saviour denied. We do not urge these melancholy facts for the purpose of denying the church character of the Establishment; we do not believe the argument can be justly pressed to this extent. And on the

* Article xix.

same principle we repel the objection to the scriptural position of the Methodist Connexion on the ground of the sacraments not having always been generally administered.

The relation of Methodism to the nation.

Having shown that Methodism holds a friendly and salutary relation to the Church, we proceed to consider its relation to the nation. And here we think it easy to show that Methodism has exercised a very sound and healthy influence on the public mind. We refer, at the outset, to the divinely established principle, that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people;" and challenge for Methodism the high honour of having originated and successfully carried out a great national reformation of religion and morals. Not to mention its reflex influence on the Church and other Christian denominations, let us call attention to the direct and immediate results of Methodist teaching and discipline.

The influence salutary in its nature.

Its extent.

At the beginning of the period under review, there were in the British Islands seventy-one thousand six hundred and sixty-eight accredited members in the Methodist Societies. It may be regarded as a very moderate calculation when we suppose three times as many more attending their worship, and forming part of their congregations; or two hundred and eighty-six thousand six hundred and seventy-two adult persons brought regularly under Methodist teaching and influence,—no unimportant part of the population of the country. The precise proportion cannot be ascertained, as there was no accurate census until 1801. About the close of the period of which we now speak, however, we have more accurate *data*, and then find in the British Islands, (omiting Ireland,) one hundred and eighty-

one thousand seven hundred and six members, or seven hundred and twenty-six thousand eight hundred and twenty-four persons under the teaching of Methodist preachers, which gives about one to every nine adults in the land. That this number of persons, brought under such instruction and influence, must have had a salutary effect on the religion and morals of the country, seems to be self-evident.

The fact is, indeed, indisputable. Let Yorkshire and Lancashire bear their testimony. Ask the persons best acquainted with the past and present state of the miners of Staffordshire and Cornwall, what has been the influence of Methodism on the population of these counties. We intend no flattering compliment to their condition in 1815; but we are bold in saying they were then morally regenerated, when compared with what they were before Methodism approached them. We have heard the rector of one of the most populous parishes in the latter county declare, that, but for the influence of Methodism, he could not have lived in his rectory-house.

Methodist loyalty.

The loyalty of the Methodist people has never been impeached. They have uniformly endeavoured to show themselves zealous supporters of the throne, and to render willing and ample obedience to the law. The influence of their Missions, by enabling colonial governments to intrust Methodist Negro slaves with arms, saved more than one of the West India Islands in the war with France. Methodist loyalty, in all human probability, preserved Dublin from being sacked in the Irish rebellion. No danger was apprehended in that capital, when, one evening, a person living in the country called, in a state of great excitement, on his brother who resided in the city, and implored him, in the most earnest manner, to leave the town with his

Special instances in the West Indies and Ireland.

family that night. He would give no reason for the urgent request, and his brother refused to comply. They parted in tears. The man urged to leave Dublin was a Methodist, and, impressed with the strange fact, took means to make it known to the lord lieutenant. This circumstance, connected with others in themselves insignificant, instantly alarmed the authorities. The castle guns were fired; the drums beat to arms; the troops were marshalled, and, before day-break, marched out of the city, when they met the rebel army about three miles from the town, and, after a bloody conflict, completely defeated it, and saved the capital. This, it is true, was but a single act of individual duty; but it is in perfect accordance with the character of the Connexion, and the entire course of its teaching and influence.

Methodism not opposed to liberty.

But it is alleged that the spirit and tendency of Methodism are opposed to the progress of rational liberty. On this point we are prepared to speak with perfect freedom. All persons, and all public institutions, have to shape their actions and general course of conduct according to the circumstances in which they are placed, and the influences which they feel called on to promote or to resist. Now it happened that, during the period now under consideration, the evils which threatened the peace and safety of society arose from the prevalence of extreme democratic and revolutionary principles, analogous to those which had deluged France with blood, and plunged in one common ruin the throne, the nobility, and the Church. We do not regard it as any discredit to Methodism, that, without leaving its high function as a religious institution, it discouraged and, in some measure, effectually checked the progress of such sentiments. But it did this, not by political agitation, but by a manifestation of scriptural truth, and the exhibition

of sterling patriotism and loyalty. Leaving individual members to form their own opinions, and to follow their own courses on minor points, the political principles of Methodism are contained in the brief precept, "FEAR GOD, HONOUR THE KING."

Nor friendly to a ruling democracy in church or state.

If, however, by "rational liberty" is meant, as we fear is too often the case, a desire for the people to wrest from the hands of the ruling authorities every portion of power and influence which they can possibly secure, then we freely admit that the religious principles of Methodism are opposed to such a course of action. Then Methodism would resist the popular clamour by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's;" "Render unto all their dues." Methodism feels bound by religious obligation to pay a willing homage to the throne as an ordinance of God; and fully recognises the scriptural authority of the Christian ministry. Both in church and state, therefore, the religious principles—not merely the political opinions—of Methodism are opposed to a ruling democracy. Whatever opinions individual members may form,—and they are by no rules of the Connexion withheld from entertaining those which they prefer,—the Connexion, as a whole, is thoroughly constitutional.

Benevolent and philanthropic exertions.

But the enunciation of abstract principles on such subjects does not produce extensive conviction. Let us then look at the conduct and bearing of Methodism during this period. Every change made in the legislation of Methodism was a concession to popular opinion; but a concession so guarded from abuse, as to preserve intact the essential principles bequeathed by Wesley. The persevering efforts of the leading Methodists of the day for the suppression of the infamous Slave Trade, until that

iniquitous traffic was abolished by law; and the still more laborious and self-denying exertions for the amelioration of the condition of the slaves in the British colonies, in sending them the Gospel by the hands of Methodist missionaries,—are too well known to need amplification. The Methodists, also, as the preceding pages show, took a leading part in the defeat of Lord Sidmouth's infamous Bill, which would have deprived Englishmen of the liberty of freely worshipping God. They were equally prominent in securing the passing of the important statute by which that religious freedom is fully guaranteed to the subjects of the British crown. Indeed, the Methodist, in so far as he differs from any other mere citizens of the state, is bound by higher and holier obligations than they to love his country, serve his sovereign, and do his best to promote the universal well-being of mankind.

The earnest Protestantism of Methodism.

Before dismissing the relation of Methodism to the nation, there is one other point to which attention should be directed. There has never been a period, since the great Reformation, when England has been perfectly free from danger through Popish influence. We, in common with all evangelical Christians, feel that this is the case now. Nor is it possible to mention a point to which all the national and religious interests converge as they do to this. The Protestantism of Britain is the cause of her might, the secret of her greatness, the grand motive power which, penetrating her institutions, gives vitality, energy, and irresistible potency to them all. How then does Methodism stand in respect of this palladium of Britain's weal? What aspect does she wear toward its Popish aggressors?

The answer is simply that she stands alone in the purity and energy of her Protestant character, and in the force of her opposition to every encroachment. We are not

ignorant of the praiseworthy exertions of the Established Church and of Protestant Dissenters in support of the Protestantism of our country. Nor are we disposed to underrate their value. Although we doubt not that the Church of England numbers a multitude of sons who would rather follow Ridley and Latimer to the stake than wear the mark of the beast; yet we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact: The lamented defect in the Reformation noticed in a previous volume,* has left in the body of the Church a *stand-point* on which Popish influence may find a resting-place, and Popish energy a fulcrum for action. There are things common to Popery and the National Establishment which threaten the Protestant character of the latter, weaken the hands of her truly Protestant members, and misguide many of her earnest sons back to the Popish darkness from which their fathers, by many a sacrifice of blood, emerged.

Methodism the greatest defence against Popery.

Nor have all the Dissenting bodies kept themselves in such a state of antagonism to Popish influence and action as could be desired. The hostile attitude in which they stand toward the National Church has induced no little sympathy between some of them and Roman Catholics, who hold an equally belligerent position toward the Establishment. This sympathy has been increased by the professions of religious liberty which it suits the present circumstances of the Catholics to make. We have seen men whose ancestors perished under the Popish intolerance of the Stuarts, exerting themselves to the utmost to place political power in the hands of the Papists of the present day. Methodism, being free alike from the antique remnants of superstition,—which are regarded as obsolete by Protestant churchmen, but unfortunately enable those

* See Vol. i., pp. 34, 35.

who are otherwise minded to do mischief,—and also from any hostile feeling towards the Church, which might lead its members to support the claims of her Catholic enemies, —stands in a purely Protestant position. Friendly to the Church in her Protestant character; friendly also to every form of Evangelical Dissent, regarded as an instrument of diffusing the light and power of the Gospel; and esteeming all for Christ's sake; Methodism, nevertheless, rears the wide extent of her connexional energy and influence as a barrier against the aggressions of Antichrist; and as such we believe its national importance to be unrivalled, and regard it as adapted by the providence of God largely to contribute to the preservation of this land in the faith of Christ.

Conclusion.

We close our review of this period of Methodist history. It reveals the progress of a religious people through twenty-five years of faithful toil and Christian warfare. The struggles which followed the death of Wesley, although marked by much that is to be regretted, issued in the establishment of a polity which carried the Connexion successfully through this period of its history. Harassed by much opposition, and met by great obstacles, it went on aggregating numbers and influence, until it stood before the world as one of the great evangelizing institutions of the country.

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APPENDIX.

A, page 18.—*To the Members of our Societies, who desire to receive the Lord's Supper from the hands of their own Preachers.*

VERY DEAR BRETHREN,

THE Conference desire us to write to you, in their name, in the most tender and affectionate manner, and to inform you of the event of their deliberations concerning the administration of the Lord's Supper.

After debating the subject time after time, we were greatly divided in sentiment. In short, we knew not what to do, that peace and union might be preserved. At last one of the senior brethren (Mr. Pawson) proposed that we should commit the matter to God by putting the question to the lot, considering that the Oracles of God declare, that "the Lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty:* And again, that "the lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord:"† And considering also that we have the example of the Apostles themselves, in a matter, which we thought, all things considered, of less importance.

We accordingly prepared the Lots; and four of us prayed. God was surely then present, yea, His glory filled the room. Almost all the preachers were in tears; and, as they afterwards confessed, felt an undoubted assurance that God Himself would decide. Mr. Adam Clarke was then called on to draw the Lot, which was, "You shall not administer the sacrament the ensuing year." All were satisfied. All submitted. All was peace. Every countenance seemed to testify that every heart said, "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good." A minute was then formed according to the previous explanation of the Lots, that the sacrament should not be administered in our Connexion, for the ensuing year, except in London. The prohibition reaches the clergy of the Church of England as well as the other brethren.

We do assure you, dear brethren, we should have been perfectly resigned, if the Lot had fallen on the other side. Yea, we should, as far as Christian prudence and expediency would have justified, have encouraged the administration of the Lord's Supper by the preachers; because we had not a doubt but God was uncommonly present on the occasion, and did Himself decide.

Signed, in behalf of the Conference,

ALEXANDER MATHER, President.
THOMAS COKE, Secretary.

B, page 23.—*An Address to the Members of the Methodist Societies throughout England, from the Conference assembled at Leeds, August 6th*, 1793.

DEAR BRETHREN,

WE feel it our duty to send you this Address, lest the insinuations of any, who are enemies to our prosperity and unity, should grieve your minds, and injure the work of God.

Our venerable father, who has gone to his great reward, lived and died a member and friend of the Church of England. His attachment to it was so strong and so unshaken, that nothing but irresistible necessity induced him to deviate from it in any degree. In many instances God Himself obliged him to do this. He powerfully called him forth into the streets and open fields, and afterwards raised to his assistance hundreds of men who never passed through the usual forms of ordination. To all these evident providences of God Mr. Wesley submitted, though at first with great reluctance. In consequence he found himself obliged to erect chapels, which were neither consecrated according to the usual method of the Church of England, nor in the least subject to the direction of the national episcopacy. In all these things he deviated from the Establishment, merely on the ground of unavoidable necessity; or, which is the same to a truly pious soul, from the clear manifested providence and will of God.

A dilemma, or difficulty, of a similar kind has been experienced by us since the death of

* Prov. xviii. 18. † Prov. xvi. 33.

Mr. Wesley. A few of our Societies have repeatedly importuned us to grant them the liberty of receiving the Lord's Supper from their own preachers. But, desirous of adhering most strictly to the plan which Mr. Wesley laid down, we again and again denied their request. The subject, however, is now come to its crisis. We find that we have no alternative, but to comply with their requisition, or entirely to lose them! O brethren, we "hate putting away!" especially those who are members of the mystical body of Christ, and our dearly beloved brethren; and whose only error, where they do err, is that of the judgment, and not of the heart. And can we suffer these to forsake their faithful pastors, and possibly to run into the jaws of some ravening wolf, when the point in contest must be allowed by all to be *unessential* to salvation.

But we are not insensible that our brethren on the other side may justly urge, "Are not our interests as dear to you as theirs? Why then will you grieve us in so tender a point? Why will you oppose us in those particulars, which we think of very great importance to the prosperity of Zion? Why will you force upon us a term of communion to which we never consented, or expect us to remain united to those who will be ever grieving us, by pressing the necessity of compliance with *that*, which we judge to be highly injurious to the cause of God?"

Such is the dilemma, dear brethren, to which we have been reduced. We allow the full force of the arguments which the brethren who disapprove of the administration of the Lord's Supper, urge as above: nor can we, on any consideration, lay on them a new term of communion, or suffer a *single person* among them to be grieved by the reasonings of those who wish for an innovation in our plan. We therefore weighed the delicate subject with the greatest seriousness and deliberation, feeling the tenderest pity for those of our brethren who thought themselves aggrieved; and came finally to the following resolution: "That the sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered by the preachers in any part of our Connexion, except where the whole Society is unanimous for it, and *will not be contented without it;* and, even in those few exempt Societies, it shall be administered, as far as practicable, in the evening only, and according to the form of the Church of England. For we could not bear that the sacrament, which was instituted by our Lord as a bond of peace and union, should become a bone of contention; and are determined never to sanction the administration of that holy ordinance, for the purpose of strife and division.

You may clearly see from hence, dear brethren, that it is *the people*, in the instances referred to, who have forced us into this further deviation from our union to the Church of England. Still we wish to be united to it as a Body at large. The few Societies which answer the description mentioned in the above resolution, need but have a small influence on the whole Connexion. We cannot, however, we will not part with any of our dear flock, who love God and man, on account of unessential points. For we love you *all*, and are the servants of you all for Jesu's sake. But we entreat our Societies at large, (the few exempt cases excepted) to continue, as usual, in connexion with the Church of England; and we shall, with great cheerfulness and contentment, labour among them according to that simple original plan of Methodism, established and left to us by our venerable friend.

We must observe to you in conclusion, that we feel the most unfeigned loyalty to the king, and a sincere attachment to the constitution. We reverence the government; are conscious of the many blessings we enjoy under our gracious sovereign, and are thankful to God for them; and do earnestly and sincerely recommend the same principles and spirit to you.

We remain, dear Brethren,
Your most affectionate Servants and faithful Pastors.

C, page 27.—*Letter of the Bristol Trustees' Attorney to Mr. Henry Moore.*

Bristol, *August 11th*, 1794.

Mr. Henry Moore,

We, the undersigned, trustees for the Methodist preaching-house, called the "New Room," in the Horse-Fair, and also for Guinea Street chapel, do give you this notice, that you are not appointed by us to preach or expound God's holy word in either of those places, and that no other person or persons have or hath any legal right to make that appointment

but only we the trustees: we therefore forbid and caution you against attempting trespassing upon the above trust-premises, as you will answer it at your peril.

Henry Durbin,	William Green,
Daniel Lane,	Edward Stock,
William Pine,	Thomas Roberts,
Daniel Wait, jun.,	Nathaniel Gifford,
John Curtis.	

Witness, James Hughes, Attorney.

D, page 30.—*Plan of Pacification.*

I. Concerning the Lord's Supper, Baptism, &c.

1. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in any chapel, except the majority of the trustees of that chapel on the one hand, and the majority of the stewards and leaders belonging to that chapel (as the best qualified to give the sense of the people) on the other hand, allow of it. Nevertheless, in all cases, the consent of the Conference shall be obtained, before the Lord's Supper be administered.

2. Wherever there is a Society, but no chapel, if the majority of the stewards and leaders of that Society testify, that it is the wish of the people that the Lord's Supper should be administered to them, their desire shall be gratified: provided, that the consent of the Conference be previously obtained.

3. Provided nevertheless, that in Mount Pleasant chapel in Liverpool, and in all other chapels where the Lord's Supper has been already peaceably administered, the administration of it shall be continued in future.

4. The administration of baptism, the burial of the dead, and service in Church-hours, shall be determined according to the regulations above-mentioned.

5. Wherever the Lord's Supper shall be administered according to the before mentioned regulations, it shall always be continued, except the Conference order the contrary.

6. The Lord's Supper shall be administered by those *only* who are authorized by the Conference; and at such times, and in such manner *only*, as the Conference shall appoint.

7. The administration of baptism, and the Lord's Supper, according to the above regulations, is intended only for the members of our own Society.

8. We agree that the Lord's Supper be administered among us on Sunday evenings only: except where the majority of the stewards and leaders desire it in Church-hours; or where it has already been administered in those hours. Nevertheless, it shall never be administered on those Sundays on which it is administered in the parochial church.

9. The Lord's Supper shall be always administered in England according to the form of the Established Church: but the person who administers shall have full liberty to give out hymns, and to use exhortation and extemporary prayer.

10. Wherever Divine service is performed in England on the Lord's day in Church-hours, the officiating preacher shall read either the service of the Established Church, our venerable father's abridgement, or, at least, the lessons appointed by the Calendar. But we recommend either the full service, or the abridgement.

II. Concerning Discipline.

1. The appointment of preachers shall remain solely with the Conference; and no trustee or number of trustees, shall expel or exclude from their chapel or chapels, any preachers so appointed.

2. Nevertheless, if the majority of the trustees, or the majority of the stewards and leaders of any Society, believe that any preacher appointed for their Circuit is immoral, erroneous in doctrines, deficient in abilities, or that he has broken any of the rules abovementioned, they shall have authority to summon the preachers of the District, and all the trustees, stewards, and leaders of the Circuit, to meet in their chapel on a day and hour appointed, (sufficient time being given.) The chairman of the District shall be president of the assembly; and every preacher, trustee, steward, and leader shall have a single vote, the chairman possessing also the casting voice. And if the majority of the meeting judge that the accused preacher is immoral, erroneous in doctrines, deficient in abilities, or has

broken any of the rules above-mentioned, he shall be considered as removed from that Circuit: and the District Committee shall, as soon as possible, appoint another preacher for that Circuit, instead of the preacher so removed: and shall determine among themselves how the removed preacher shall be disposed of till the Conference, and shall have authority to suspend the said preacher from all public duties, till the Conference, if they judge proper. The District Committee shall also supply as well as possible, the place of the removed preacher, till another preacher be appointed. And the preacher thus appointed, and all other preachers, shall be subject to the above mode of trial. And if the District Committee do not appoint a preacher for that Circuit, instead of the removed preacher, within a month after the aforesaid removal, or do not fill up the place of the removed preacher till another preacher be appointed, the majority of the said trustees, stewards, and leaders, being again regularly summoned, shall appoint a preacher for the said Circuit, provided he be a member of the Methodist Connexion, till the ensuing Conference.

3. If any preacher refuse to submit to the above mode of trial, in any of the cases mentioned above, he shall be considered as suspended till the Conference. And if any trustees expel from any chapel a preacher by their own *separate* authority, the preachers appointed for that Circuit shall not preach in that chapel till the ensuing Conference, or till a trial take place, according to the mode mentioned above

4. If any trustees expel or exclude a preacher, by their own *separate* authority, from any chapel in any Circuit, the chairman of the District shall summon the members of the District Committee, the trustees of that Circuit who have not offended, and the stewards and leaders of the Circuit. And the members of such assembly shall examine into the evidence on both sides: and if the majority of them determine, that the state of the Society in which the exclusion took place, requires that a new chapel should be built previous to the meeting of the Conference, every proper step shall be immediately taken for erecting such chapel. And no step shall on any account be taken to erect a chapel for *such purpose* before the meeting of the Conference, till such meeting be summoned, and such determination be made.

5. No preacher shall be suspended or removed from his Circuit by any District Committee, except he have the privilege of the trial before-mentioned.

6. The hundred preachers mentioned in the enrolled deed, and their successors, are the only *legal* persons who constitute the Conference; and we think the junior brethren have no reason to object to this proposition, as they are regularly elected according to seniority,

7. Inasmuch as in drawing up the preceding regulations, we have laboured to restore and preserve the peace and unity of the Society, and, in order thereto, have endeavoured to keep the preachers out of all disputes on the subjects therein specified:—be it understood, that any preacher who shall disturb the peace of the Society by speaking for or against the introduction of the Lord's Supper in our Societies, or concerning the old or new plan, so called, shall be subject to the trial and penalties before mentioned.

8. And in order that the utmost impartiality may be manifest in these regulations, for the peace of the whole body, we also resolve, that if any local preacher, trustee, steward, or leader, shall disturb the peace of the Society by speaking for or against the introduction of the Lord's Supper, or concerning the old or new plan, so called, the superintendent of the Circuit, or the majority of the trustees, stewards, and leaders of the Society so disturbed, shall have authority to summon a meeting of the travelling preachers of the Circuit, and the trustees, stewards, and leaders of that Society. Evidence shall be examined on both sides; and, if the charge be proved, the superintendent preacher shall expel from the Society the person so offending.

E, page 84.—*Halifax Circular.*

To the METHODIST-PREACHERS in general, and to the *Conference* and *Assistants* in particular.

DEAR BRETHREN,

WE whose Names are underwritten, having seriously weighed the present State of our Affairs, beg leave to lay before you the result of our Deliberations.

Ought not the Preachers in each Circuit to consult with their neighbouring Brethren, and appoint who shall attend the ensuing Conference? For, would it be prudent for *all* to go? as the Circuits would then be left for a considerable time without Preachers: and it will be impossible to find accommodations for *all* among our own friends in Manchester. Yet,

ought not as many of the Members of the Conference as possible, with the Assistants, and Preachers who are to be admitted, to attend? Likewise to take into Consideration our Form or Mode of Government for the future; that you may not have *all* to do, when you meet at Manchester.

There appear to us but two ways: either to appoint another King in Israel; or to be governed by the Conference Plan, by forming ourselves into Committees. If you adopt the first, who is the Man? What Power is he to be invested with? and what Revenue is he to be allowed?—But *this is incompatible* with the *Conference Deed*. If the latter, we take the Liberty to offer our Thoughts upon that Subject.

1. Fill up the vacant Places in the Conference Deed with Preachers, according to their *Senority in the Work*.

2. Chuse a President for *one Year only*, according to the enrolled Deed.

3. Appoint a Secretary and Stewards for *one Year only*, except for the Preachers' Fund.

4. Appoint a Person from Year to Year to hold a Conference in Ireland.

5. Appoint different Committees, which will take in all the Circuits in the three Kingdoms, to manage the Affairs of their respective Districts, from one Conference to another.

6. Let these Committees, during the time of Conference, appoint their own Presidents for the *ensuing Year*. And let their Names be inserted in the Minutes, that they may convene the Committee in Case of the bad behaviour or Death of a Preacher, or any other emergency.

7. Let each of the Presidents bring an account of their Proceedings to the Conference, and *there* let them be *finally determined*.

8. Let every Preacher that is recommended at the Conference, and approved of, but not *then* wanted, have his Name inserted at the end of the Minutes, that the aforesaid Presidents, or Committees, may know where to apply for a Preacher, when one is wanted in any of their respective Districts.

9. In Case the Number of these Preachers be not sufficient to supply the vacancies that happen between Conference and Conference, let the Committee agree with a Local Preacher to supply till the *next Conference only*.

10 If the Number of Clergymen who do not travel, Superannuated and Supernumerary Preachers, be not limited, may not our Government, in process of Time, fall into the Hands of Men who cannot, properly, be called Travelling Preachers!!!

11. Should it be necessary to *settle any more Clergymen*, or to make more Supernumerary Preachers than a *given Number*, will it not be wise to put out of the Deed the *first Clergyman*, or *Supernumerary Preacher*, and put a Travelling Preacher in his Place? George Whitfield, or the Book Steward, for the time being, excepted.

N.B.—Read the Conference Deed, and you will be convinced that *no Person has a right, by that Deed*, to go to *Ireland*, or *elsewhere*, to *hold a Conference:* and, had not our last Conference appointed our ensuing Meeting at *Manchester*, by *that Deed*, we must have gone to *London, Bristol*, or *Leeds*.

We submit these Thoughts to your Consideration, and earnestly Pray to GOD that you may have Wisdom to improve, amend, or reject them, as shall be most for His Glory, and the CONTINUATION of ITINERANCY AMONG the METHODISTS!

We are,
Dear BRETHREN,
Your Affectionate BRETHREN,

WILLIAM THOMPSON.
JOHN PAWSON.
ROBERT RORERTS.
JOHN ALLEN.
RICHARD RODDA.
SAMUEL BRADBURN.
THOMAS TENNANT.
THOMAS HANBY.
CHRISTOPHER HOPPER.

HALIFAX,
30th of March, 1791

Just Published, An Account of the Character of Mr. WESLEY, by Messrs. RODDA and BRADBURN.——Price 6d.

F, page 86.—*Meeting of Laymen at Redruth.*

AT A MEETING OF THE DELEGATES, AND OTHERS,
FROM THE *METHODIST SOCIETIES,*
IN THE COUNTY OF CORNWALL,
HELD AT REDRUTH, JUNE 14th, 1791,
IT WAS AGREED,
THAT AN AMENDMENT OF OUR DISCIPLINE IS NECESSARY.

WE THEREFORE RESOLVE,

1 THAT, in the forming of Classes, the Members constituting every Class (or a Majority of them) shall chuse their Leader.

2 THAT the People in every Society (or a Majority of them) shall choose the Society Stewards.

3 THAT no Preacher shall admit into, or expel from, the Society any Member, without the Consent of a Majority of such Society.

4 THAT the Stewards assembled at Quarter Meeting shall choose the Circuit Stewards.

5 THAT there shall be no Division of Circuits, without Consent of a Majority of the Stewards at Quarter Meeting.

6 THAT no Person be recommended to Conference (or sent out) as a Travelling Preacher without a Certificate from the Stewards assembled at Quarter Meeting.

7 THAT if any Preacher be charged with not walking worthy of his Vocation, or with being deficient in Abilities, the Circuit Stewards (on Complaint to them made) shall convene the Stewards of the several Societies in their Circuit, who, from among themselves, shall choose an equal Number with the Preachers present, to judge of the Charge or Charges that shall be produced; and, according to the Decision of the Majority, such Preacher shall be continued in, or expelled the Circuit.

8 THAT WE will on all Occasions support the Itinerant Plan, and carfully contribute our Proportion of the Expence.

WE PROPOSE

THAT every Preacher coming from a distant Circuit, shall bring a Certificate of his Good Conduct (while in that Circuit) from a Majority of the Stewards assembled at Quarter Meeting.

THAT, for the Advantage of the Connection in general, the Preachers (who are not included in the Conference Deed) be admitted to an equal share of the Government, and have a Vote in all Cases; the affairs of Preaching Houses only excepted.

WE highly disapprove of the Proposal for dividing the Kingdom into Districts, conceiving it would be injurious to Methodism.

RESOLVED,

THAT a Copy of these Resolutions, Proposals, &c., be transmitted to every Travelling Preacher in the Kingdom. Wishing you Peace, Amity, and Harmony at the ensuing Conference: Our Prayer is that Prosperity may attend the Cause in which you are embarked. We subscribe ourselves your affectionate Brethren,

Richard Cornish	Edward Roberts	John Budge	Richard Andrew
John Vivian	Richard Trevithick	William Boase	Nicholas Rodda
William Anthony	Richard Penrose	Samuel Phillips	Sampson Hosking
William Carne	Francis Hall	Henry Gundry	Richard Williams
Charles Richards	Stephen Harvey	Samuel Lane	James Bennetts
Tristram Powning	William Hoskings	Richard Libby	John Martyn
Mark Rowe	George Michell	Solomon Burrall	Emanual Pope
Charles Slade	William Jeffree	Benedict Carvoso	Henry Trevenen
Alexander Dingle	Edward Lovey	Benjamin Moon (*sic*)	John Collatt
William Carvoso	Henry Pearce	James Thomas	William Condy
James Sems	Joseph Carne	James Mathews	Henry James
John Thomas	Peter Hammill	William Michell	Paul Penrose.
Philip Bray	Joseph Andrew	Thomas Gundry	

G, page 100.—*Minutes of a Meeting held at Lichfield, April 2nd*, 1794.

We will make no avowed separation from the Church of England.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be administered wherever there is a majority of the Society who desire it; but the preachers must not canvass for votes, or do anything to obtain a majority which may lead to division or strife; nor should the Lord's Supper be administered in any chapel when a majority of the trustees are against it, except a fair and full indemnification be afforded them for all the debts which they are responsible for, supposing they require such indemnity.

That there be an order of superintendents appointed by the Conference.

That all the preachers who shall be approved by the Conference shall from time to time be ordained as elders.

That all the preachers, when admitted into full Connexion, shall receive their admission by being ordained deacons by the superintendents appointed by the Conference: provided, 1. That no preacher at present on probation, or in full Connexion, shall be under any obligation to submit to ordination. 2. That no preacher shall receive letters of orders till he has been ordained an elder.

That the superintendents appointed among us, by the Conference, shall be annually changed, if necessary.

That the Connexion be formed into seven or eight general divisions.

That each superintendent shall visit the principal Societies in his division, at least once a year; that he shall have authority to execute, or see executed, all the branches of Methodist discipline, and to determine, after having consulted the preachers who are with him, in all cases of difficulty, till the Conference.

That the superintendent of any division, where he judge himself inadequate to determine in any given case, shall have authority to call in the president to his assistance; in which case the president shall, if possible, attend, and shall have the ultimate determination of the case until the Conference.

The divisions for the present:—

1. London, Sussex, Rochester, Canterbury, Godalming, Norwich, Yarmouth, Diss, St. Ives, Bury, Colchester, Lynn, Walsingham, Bedford, Higham Ferrers.

2. Bristol, Bath, Portsmouth, Sarum, Norman Isles, Bradford, Wilts, Gloucester, Shepton Mallett, Taunton, Collumpton, Plymouth, St. Austle, Redruth, Penzance.

3. Birmingham, Oxford, Worcester, Pembroke, Glamorgan, Brecon, Wolverhampton, Shrewsbury, Burslem, Hinckley.

4. Manchester, Macclesfield, Leek, Stockport, Oldham, Bolton, Wigan, Chester, Liverpool, Northwich, Blackburn, Colne.

5. Sheffield, Nottingham, Northampton, Banbury, Castle Donnington, Newark, Derby, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Grimsby, Horncastle, Gainsborough, Epworth, Rotherham.

6. Leeds, Wakefield, Huddersfield, Birstal, Dewsbury, Bradford, Halifax, Keighley, Otley, York, Thirsk, Bridlington

7. Newcastle, Sunderland, Alnwick, Hexham, Barnard Castle, Whitehaven, Whitby, Stockton, Scarbro', Isle of Man.

8. Scotland and Ireland.

Proposed superintendents,

Dr. Coke, Dr. Mather, Dr. Pawson, Dr. Taylor, Dr. Moore, Mr. Hanby, Mr. Bradburn.

Present: T. Coke, A. Mather, T. Taylor, J. Pawson, S. Bradburn, J. Rogers, H. Moore, A. Clarke.

The whole of the above plan to be laid before the ensuing Conference, to be adopted or rejected, as they may think fit; but those present agree to recommend and support it as a thing greatly wanted, and likely to be of much advantage to the work of God.

H, page 102.—*To the Members of the Methodist Societies throughout England.*

BRISTOL, *Aug. 8th*, 1794.

DEAR BRETHREN,

WE have again taken into our mature consideration the state of our Societies in this kingdom, respecting the administration of the sacrament, and some other particulars, which have engaged the attention of many of our people; and, for the sake of peace and love, have come to the following resolutions:—

1st. All ecclesiastical titles, such as *Reverend*, &c., shall be laid aside, as also gowns, bands, &c., agreeably to the resolutions of the Conference held at Leeds in 1793.

2dly. Preaching in Church-hours shall not be permitted, except for special reasons, and where it will not cause a division.

3dly. As the Lord's Supper has not been administered, except where the Society has been unanimous for it, and would not have been contented without it, it is now agreed that the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in future, where the union and concord of the Society can be preserved without it.

4thly. The preachers will not perform the office of baptism, except for the desirable ends of love and concord; though Baptism, as well as the burial of the dead, was performed by many of the preachers, long before the death of Mr. Wesley, and with his consent.

5thly. It is agreed, that the management of the temporal and spiritual concerns of the Society shall be separated, as far as the purposes of peace and harmony can be answered thereby; or as they have ever been separated in times of the greatest peace and harmony, viz., 1. The temporal concerns shall be managed by the stewards chosen for that purpose, who shall keep books, wherein all monies collected, received, or disbursed on account of their respective Societies, shall be entered. 2. The spiritual concerns shall be managed by the preachers, who have *ever* appointed leaders, chosen stewards, and admitted members into, and expelled them from, the Society, consulting their brethren, the stewards and leaders. The preachers also, as hitherto, are to appoint lovefeasts and watch-nights, and to vary the times and places of preaching, Class-meeting, &c., &c.

6thly. That the trustees may have the fullest assurance that the Conference love them, and have not the shadow of a desire to oppress them, any more than to reject any proposals which they conceive calculated to restore and preserve peace and harmony, the following articles are added:—

1st. The trustees, in conjunction with the assistant preacher, who shall have one vote only, shall choose their own stewards, who shall receive and disburse all seat-rents, and such collections as shall be made for the purpose of paying interest for money due upon the premises, or for reducing the principal: of all which monies so received or disbursed, the aforesaid stewards shall keep proper accounts in books provided for that purpose; which books shall be open for the inspection of the assistant, and audited in his presence once every year, or oftener, if convenient. Provided always, that when the necessities of the work of God require it, the trustees shall allow quarterly what may appear requisite for carrying on the work, so that it may be not cramped. Provided, that if the seat-rents and collections fall short of what will be sufficient to discharge the rents, interest of money, and other necessary expenses of the chapels, the deficiency shall be made good out of some other revenue of the Society: and that books shall be provided, wherein shall be inserted all the accounts both of the trustees, and of the stewards of the respective Societies, which shall be open for the inspection of the trustees and others, and that the said accounts shall be annually audited in the presence of the trustees. Provided also, that nothing in these resolutions shall be construed to extend to alter any of the powers contained in the trust-deeds.

2dly. No trustee (however accused, or defective in conforming to the established rules of the Society) shall be removed from the Society, unless his crime or breach of the rules of the Society be proved in the presence of the trustees and leaders.

3dly. If any preacher be accused of immorality, a meeting shall be called of all the preachers, trustees, stewards, and leaders of the Circuit in which the accused preacher labours; and

if the charge be proved to the satisfaction of the majority of such meeting, the chairman of the District in which that Circuit is situated shall remove the convicted preacher from the Circuit on the request of the majority of the meeting: nevertheless, an appeal on either side to the Conference shall remain.

Signed, in behalf of the Conference,

THOMAS HANBY, President.
THOMAS COKE, Secretary.

I, page 123.—*Disciplinary part of the Plan of Pacification.*—See page 699.

J, page 127.—*List of Trustees' Delegates.*

AT this and subsequent meetings, the following delegates were admitted, viz.—

FROM

1. *Ashton-under-Line,* James Harrop.
2. *Armley,* John Wild.
3. *Bramley,* William Field.
4. *Bulwell,* Charles Sutton.
5, 6. *Bradford,* John Butler and John Schofield.
7. *Borslem,* William Smith.
8, 9. *Birstall,* Thomas Crowther and John Armitage.
10. *Brighouse,* James Mitchell.
11. *Barnsley,* John Pollitt.
12. *Bolton,* John Fletcher.
13. *Burlington and Burlington Key,* Tho. Robinson.
14, 15. *Chapel-Town,* Abr. Dickenson and W. Naylor.
16. *Chester,* George Walker.
17. *Cawood,* Joseph Vickers,
18. *Darlington,* Matthew Naylor.
19. *Epworth,* Robert Holme.
20, 21. *Easingwould,* T. Dodgson and R. Wilkinson.
22. *Greatland,* John Iredale.
23. *Hexham,* Michael Longridge.
24. *Howden,* John Barker.
25. *Horsforth,* William Field.
26. 27. *Hull,* Thomas Thompson and John Harrop.
28, *Huddersfield,* John North.
29, 30. *Herfield,* William Leno and Siddal Beard.
31. *Harewood,* Samuel Popplewell.
32. *Hunslet,* George Beaumont.
33, 34, 35. *Keighley,* John Whitaker, John Morson, and Marmaduke Knowles
36. *Killinghall,* John Oliver.
37. *Knaresborough,* John Shutt.
38. *London,* Thomas Day.
39, 40. *Leeds,* William Hardon and John Dobson.
41. *Liverpool,* Joseph Farrer
42. *Linley,* Francis Vickerman.
43, 44. *Manchester,* Matth. Mayer and Jo. Fletcher.
45, 46. *Mossley,* John Howard and Richard Wilson.
47. *Nottingham,* Robert Hall.
48. *Newcastle-upon-Tyne,* Robert Frost.
49. *Nesson,* George Lowe.
50. *Ossett,* John Phillip.

51, 52. *Pocklington*, W. Rogerson and B. Clarkson.
53. *Pudsey*, George Beecroft.
54. *Ripon*, Thomas Dowson.
55. *Rothwell*, Thomas Wilson.
56. *Rodhall*, Joseph Thornley.
57, 58. *Sheffield*, Tho. Woodcroft and B. Woolhouse.
59. *Stockport*, George Garside.
60. *Selby*, William Allen.
61. *Shelley*, Benjamin Fitton.
62. *Thorn*, Thomas Shaw.
63, 64. *Oldham*, Edm. Whitehead and Daniel Lees.
65. *Thong*, Ely Perkin.
66. *Ulleshelf*, Michael Colson.
67. *Witchfield*, John Turner.

THOMAS THOMPSON, of *Hull*, was chosen president, and THOMAS DAY, of *London*, secretary.

K, page 138.—*Address to the Societies, and Miscellaneous Regulations.*

TO THE METHODIST SOCIETIES.

LEEDS, *August 7th*, 1797.

DEAR BRETHREN,

WE think it our duty to inform you, by the earliest opportunity, of the measures we have taken, in order to satisfy those of our brethren, who have been made more or less uneasy, by sundry publications circulated through the Societies; and, we trust, that on a serious consideration of the regulations we have agreed to at this Conference, you will see that the sacrifices in respect to authority, which we have made on the part of the whole body of travelling preachers, evidence our willingness to meet our brethren in everything which is consistent with the existence of the Methodist discipline, and our readiness to be their servants for Jesus's sake.

I. In respect to finances, or money matters:—

1. We have determined to publish annually a very minute account of the disbursement, or application of the Yearly Collection; and,

2. A full account of the affairs of Kingswood School.

3. That all bills for the support of travelling preachers, and their families, in respect to deficiencies, house-rent, fire, candles, sickness, travelling expenses, and all other matters of a temporal kind for their support, for which the Circuits cannot provide, shall first meet with the approbation of the Quarterly Meeting, and be signed by the general steward of the Circuit, before they can be brought to the District Committee.

II. In respect to all other temporal matters:—

1. It has been determined that no Circuits shall be divided, till such division has been approved of by their respective Quarterly Meetings, and signed by the general stewards.

2. That no other temporal matter shall be transacted by the District Committees, till the approbation of the respective Quarterly Meetings be first given, signed by the Circuit stewards.

III. In respect to the receiving and excluding private members of the Society:—

1. The Leaders' Meeting shall have a right to declare any person on trial improper to be received into the Society; and, after such declaration, the superintendent shall not admit such person into the Society.

2. No person shall be expelled from the Society for immorality, till such immorality be proved at a Leaders' Meeting.

IV. In respect to the appointment and removal of leaders, stewards, and local preachers, and concerning meetings:—

1. No person shall be appointed a leader or steward, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with the Leaders' Meeting: the nomination to be in the superintendent, and the approbation or disapprobation in the Leaders' Meeting.

2. The former rule concerning local preachers is confirmed, viz., that no person shall receive a Plan as a local preacher without the approbation of a Local Preachers' Meeting.

3. In compliance with a request made by the committee of persons from various parts, namely, "That the Conference be requested to re-consider and revise those rules which relate to the calling of meetings, and appointing local preachers, made last year;" we say, "No local preacher shall be permitted to preach in any other Circuit than his own, without producing a recommendation from the superintendent of the Circuit in which he lives: nor suffer any invitation to be admitted as a plea, but from men in office, who act in conjunction with the superintendent of that Circuit which he visits." The design of this rule is to prevent any, under the character of local preachers, from burdening the people, either by collecting money, or by living upon them; and to prevent improper persons, who bear no part of the expense, from inviting local preachers thus to visit them. But it never was intended to reflect the least disrespect on any of our worthy brethren, the local preachers, who, considered as a body, we greatly respect. And it should not be lost sight of, that several of the most respectable local preachers in the kingdom, who were in the committee which met the committee of preachers appointed by the Conference, declared their high approbation of the rule, and desired that it might be strengthened as much as possible, as none could justly complain of it.

4. As the committee above-mentioned requested also that the Minutes of the last Conference concerning the calling of meetings to consider the affairs of the Society or Connexion, be explained; and, as we are exceedingly desirous of preserving the peace and union of the whole body, we have agreed upon the following explanation, viz.:—

(1.) As the Leaders' Meeting is the proper meeting for the Society, and the Quarterly Meeting for the Circuit, we think that other formal meetings, in general, would be contrary to the Methodist economy, and very prejudicial in their consequences; but,

(2.) In order to be as tender as possible, consistently with what we believe to be essential to the welfare of our Societies, we allow that other formal meetings may be held, if they first receive the approbation of the superintendent and the Leaders' or Quarterly Meeting: provided also, that the superintendent, if he please, be present at every such meeting.

V. We have selected all our ancient rules, which were made before the death of our late venerable father in the Gospel, the Rev. Mr. Wesley, which are essential rules, or prudential at this present time; and have solemnly signed them, declaring our approbation of them, and determination to comply with them; one single preacher excepted,* who, in consequence, withdrew from us.

VI. We have determined, that all the rules which relate to the Societies, leaders, stewards, local preachers, trustees, and Quarterly Meetings, shall be published with the rules of the Society, for the benefit and convenience of all the members.

VII. In respect to all new rules which shall be made by the Conference.

It is determined, that if at any time the Conference see it necessary to make any new rule for the Societies at large, and such rule should be objected to, at the first Quarterly Meeting in any given Circuit; and if the major part of that meeting, in conjunction with the preachers, be of opinion that the enforcing of such rule in that Circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that Circuit, it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of such Quarterly Meeting, before the second Conference. But, if the rule be confirmed by the second Conference, it shall be binding to the whole Connexion. Nevertheless, the Quarterly Meetings, rejecting a new rule, shall not, by publications, public meetings, or otherwise, make that rule a cause of contention; but shall strive, by every means, to preserve the peace of the Connexion.

Thus, brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands, as represented in your different public meetings.

(1.) We have delivered the whole of our Yearly Collection to your management. For we know, by experience, that the bills of the Quarterly Meetings, if only *mere* justice be done to the preachers and their families, will amount to much more than the Yearly Collection. The Conference will, in this business, have no authority whatsoever. They will have nothing

* Before the Conference concluded, two other preachers withdrew.

but the trouble of receiving the money, and paying the bills which shall have been sent to them from the Quarterly Meetings, and been approved of by the District Committees. And when the accounts are published by the Conference, every Quarterly Meeting may compare its own accounts with those of the Conference, and thereby have as complete a check as the nature of things can possibly admit of.

The Conference has reserved to itself the management of its own book concerns. This is most reasonable: as the institution was established for the carrying on of the work of God, under the direction of Mr. Wesley and the Conference, was continued, by the deed or codicil of Mr. Wesley's will, for the use of the Conference, as the whole burden of the management of the business lies upon the Conference, and the servants they employ, and on the superintendents of Circuits; and also as it is the only fund which can supply any deficiencies of the Yearly Collection, as the accounts published in our Minutes for several years past clearly evidence, the Yearly Collection having not been nearly sufficient for the wants of the preachers and families, and for the carrying on of the work of God in general.

(2.) The whole management of our temporal concerns may now be truly said to be invested in the Quarterly Meetings, the District Meetings have nothing left them but a negative.

(3.) Our Societies have a full check on the superintendent, by the means of their Leaders' Meeting, in regard to the introduction of persons into Society; whilst the superintendent has sufficient scope allowed him for the increase of the Societies, not only according to the common course of things, but at the times of remarkable outpourings of the Spirit of God.

(4.) The members of our Societies are delivered from every apprehension of clandestine expulsions; as *that* superintendent would be bold indeed, who would act with partiality or injustice in the presence of the whole meeting of leaders. Such a superintendent, we trust, we have not among us; and if such there ever should be, we should be ready to do all possible justice to our injured brethren.

(5.) There is now no Society officer among us, who can be received without the consent of that meeting to which he particularly belongs; nor can any officer be appointed, except upon the same plan.

(6.) In order to prevent any degree of participation in making new rules, and to obtain information of the sentiments of our people on every such rule, we have agreed to the article mentioned under the 7th head, by which no regulations will be finally confirmed, till after a year's consideration, and the knowledge of the sentiments of the Connexion at large, through the medium of all their public officers.

In short, brethren, out of our great love for peace and union, and our great desire to satisfy your minds, we have given up to you by far the greatest part of the superintendent's authority; and if we consider that the Quarterly Meetings are the sources from whence all temporal regulations, during the intervals of the Conference, must now originally spring; and also, that the committee, formed according to the Plan of Pacification, can, in every instance, in which the trustees, leaders, and stewards choose to interfere respecting the gifts, doctrines, or moral character of preachers, supersede, in a great measure, the regular District Committees, we may, taking all these things into our view, truly say that such have been the sacrifices we have made, that our District Committees themselves have hardly any authority remaining but a bare negative in general, and the appointment of a representative to assist in drawing up the rough draught of the stations of the preachers. And besides all this, we have given the Quarterly Meetings opportunities of considering every new law, of suspending the execution of it for a year in their respective Circuits, and of sending their sentiments on it to the Conference, before it be finally confirmed.

We have represented these measures which we have taken for your satisfaction, in as concise a manner as we well could, giving you the sense of the whole, not only for brevity's sake, but for expedition, that you may be informed of the general heads of our proceedings as soon as possible. In the regulations which will be published with the rules of the Society, as mentioned above, you will have the whole at large. We are your affectionate brethren,

Signed, in behalf and by order of the Conference,

THOMAS COKE, President.
SAMUEL BRADBURN, Secretary.

SUNDRY MISCELLANEOUS REGULATIONS.

I. With respect to Districts.

1. In order to render our Districts more effective, the president of the Conference shall have power, when applied to, to supply a Circuit with preachers, if any should die or desist from travelling; and to sanction any change of preachers which it may be necessary to make in the intervals of the Conference. And to assist at any District Meeting, if applied to for that purpose, by the chairman of the District, or by a majority of the superintendents in such District. And he shall have a right, if written to by any who are concerned, to visit any Circuit, and to inquire into their affairs with respect to Methodism, and, in union with the District Committee, redress any grievance.

2. The chairman of each District, in conjunction with his brethren of the Committee, shall be responsible to the Conference for the execution of the laws, as far as his District is concerned.

3. That no chairman may have cause to complain of the want of power, in cases which (according to his judgment) cannot be settled in the ordinary District Meeting, he shall have authority to summon three of the nearest superintendents, to be incorporated with the District Committee, who shall have equal authority to vote, and settle everything till the Conference.

4. The Conference recommends it to the superintendents of the Circuits, to invite, on all important occasions, the chairman of their respective Districts, to be present at their Quarterly Meetings.

5. The chairman of every District shall be chosen by the ballot of the Conference, after the names of all the preachers in the District have been read to them by the secretary.

II. As to Delegates.

The Conference, having maturely considered the subject, are thoroughly persuaded, with many of our Societies, whose letters have been read in full Conference, that they cannot admit any but regular travelling preachers into their body, either in the Conference or District Meetings, and preserve the system of Methodism entire, particularly the itinerant plan, which they are determined to support. But let it be well observed, that, in explaining their Minutes, it was fully and explicitly understood, that if there be any accusation against a preacher, or any difficult affair to settle, not only the Circuit or town steward, but any leader, or even member of the Society, shall be admitted as evidence to the District Meeting: provided the matter has been first heard at a Quarterly Meeting.

III. With regard to Preachers.

1. Before any superintendent propose a preacher to the Conference, as proper to be admitted on trial, such preacher must not only be approved of at the March Quarterly Meeting, but must have read and signed the General Minutes, as fully approving of them. Nor must any one suppose, or pretend to think, that the conversations which have been on any of these Minutes, were intended so to qualify them, as in the least to affect the spirit and design of them.

2. No local preacher shall keep lovefeasts without the consent of the superintendent, nor in any wise interfere with his business. Let every one keep in his own place, and attend to the duties of his own Station.

L, page 153.—*Course of Examination of Candidates for the Ministry, usually pursued at the District Meeting.*

Do you believe that the Scriptures reveal a Trinity in Unity in the eternal Godhead?

How do you define this fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith?

By what line of argument do you prove that this mysterious truth is taught in the Scriptures?

Do you believe that there exists a relation between the persons of the Trinity? and what is that relation?

How do you prove the Eternal Sonship of the second person in the Trinity?

How do you farther prove the essential Divinity of the Son of God?

How do prove the distinct personality and proper Deity of the Holy Ghost?

What do you understand by original sin? Are the whole posterity of Adam, in consequence of sin, involved in guilt, and subjects of inherent depravity?

How do you prove this to be the doctrine of the Scriptures?

In what light do you regard the death of Jesus Christ?

How do you define the nature of that atonement or propitiation which Jesus Christ made?

For whom did He offer this propitiatory sacrifice?

How do you prove from the Scriptures that our Lord has made atonement for the sins of the whole world?

In what does repentance for sin consist?

What do you understand by the present justification of a sinner before God?

Are not pardon, justification, and adoption, substantially the same act of God, viewed under the different relations which He bears to man as a Sovereign, a Judge, and a Father?

By what Scriptures do you sustain this view?

What is the nature of justifying faith?

What are the immediate results of justification?

What is the direct witness of the Spirit?

Is this the privilege of all Christian believers?

What is the new birth, or regeneration?

Although, as we believe, justification, the witness of the Spirit, and regeneration, are coexistent, (that is, they are bestowed upon us in the same moment of time,) is there not, in the order of thinking, a succession of one to the other? and between the two latter, is there not a relation resembling that of cause and effect?

In what respects does regeneration differ from justification?

How does it differ from sanctification?

What is entire sanctification?

Do you believe that this state of "perfect love" is attainable in the present life by all believers?

How do you prove it to be so attainable?

Do you believe that the perseverance of the saints is conditional?

How do you prove that the saints may finally fall from a state of grace?

What do you believe concerning the resurrection of the dead?

Will the same body, in the popular sense of that term, be raised again?

Do you believe that the happiness of the righteous and the punishments of the wicked, in a future state, will be strictly and literally eternal?

Have you read the Large Minutes?

Do you approve of the Methodist discipline?

Will you observe it yourself, and enforce it upon others?

Do you believe the Christian Sabbath to be a Divine institution, of perpetual and universal obligation in the Christian church?

What are the sacraments which our Lord has ordained in His church?

Are you under any matrimonial engagement?

Do you take no snuff, tobacco, or drams?

Are you free from debt?

If approved, are you willing to be employed under the direction of the Conference, in any part of the world; or do you restrict your offer?

M, page 192.

NUMBER OF MEMBERS AND CIRCUITS FROM 1790 TO 1815.

Years.	Great Britain and Ireland.		Missions.			Circuits.		Total number of Members.
	Numbers.	Increase.	Numbers.	Increase.	Decrease.	No.	Inc.	
1791	72,468	800	6,525	1,025	...	115	7	78,993
1792	74,124	1,656	7,847	1,322	...	121	6	81,971
1793	74,925	801	8,163	316	...	131	10	83,088
1794	83,368	8,443	8,069	...	94	137	6	91,437
1795	89,344	5,976	8,781	612	...	138	1	98,125
1796	95,226	5,882	9,876	1,095	...	143	5	105,102
1797	99,519	4,293	8,742	...	1,134	145	2	108,261
1798	101,682	2,163	11,986	3,244	...	149	4	110,668
1799	107,919	6,237	12,830	844	...	156	7	120,749
1800	109,701	1,782	13,717	887	...	161	5	123,418
1801	113,762	4,061	*	...	...	167	6	...
1802	119,660	5,908	15,939	†2,222	...	171	4	135,599
1803	119,869	209	15,912	...	27	181	10	135,781
1804	120,042	173	15,846	...	66	192	11	135,888
1805	125,236	5,094	15,348	...	498	194	2	140,584
1806	133,572	8,336	14,880	...	468	203	9	148,452
1807	143,102	9,530	14,617	...	263	217	14	157,719
1808	151,145	8,043	14,836	219	...	236	19	165,981
1809	158,021	6,876	13,669	...	1,167	257	21	171,690
1810	166,006	7,985	13,630	...	39	280	23	179,636
1811	173,758	7,752	13,482	...	148	315	35	187,240
1812	182,947	9,189	14,627	1,145	...	324	9	197,574
1813	191,264	8,317	17,025	2,398	...	336	12	208,289
1814	203,273	12,009	18,747	1,722	...	341	5	222,020
1815	211,063	7,790	19,885	1,138	...	354	13	230,948

* No return of the number of Members on the Mission Stations is given this year.
† This is the increase for the two years.

N, page 197.—*Mr. Wesley's last Will and Testament.*

In the name of God, Amen.

I, JOHN WESLEY, clerk, some time fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, revoking all others, appoint this to be my last will and testament.

I give all my books, now on sale, and the copies of them, (only subject to a rent-charge of eighty-five pounds a year, to the widow and children of my brother,) to my faithful friends, John Horton, merchant, George Wolff, merchant, and William Marriott, stock-broker, all of London, in trust, for the general fund of the Methodist Conference, in carrying on the work of God, by itinerant preachers; on condition that they permit the following committee, Thomas Coke, James Creighton, Peard Dickenson, Thomas Rankin, George Whitfield, and the London assistant, for the time being, still to superintend the printing-press, and to employ Hannah Paramore and George Paramore, as heretofore; unless four of the committee judge a change to be needful.

I give the books, furniture, and whatever else belongs to me, in the three houses at Kingswood, in trust, to Thomas Coke, Alexander Mather, and Henry Moore, to be still employed in teaching and maintaining the children of poor travelling preachers.

I give to Thomas Coke, Doctor John Whitehead, and Henry Moore, all the books which are in my study and bed-chamber at London, and in my studies elsewhere, in trust, for the use of the preachers who shall labour there from time to time.

I give the coins, and whatever else is found in the drawer of my bureau at London, to my dear grandaughters, Mary and Jane Smith.

I give all my manuscripts to Thomas Coke, Doctor Whitehead, and Henry Moore, to be burned or published as they see good.

I give whatever money remains in my bureau and pockets, at my decease, to be equally divided between Thomas Briscoe, William Collins, John Easton, and Isaac Brown.

I desire my gowns, cassocks, sashes, and bands, may remain in the chapel for the use of the clergymen attending there.

I desire the London assistant, for the time being, to divide the rest of my wearing apparel between those four of the travelling preachers that want it most; only my pelisse I give to the Rev. Mr. Creighton; my watch to my friend Joseph Bradford, my gold seal to Elizabeth Ritchie.

I give my chaise and horses to James Ward and Charles Wheeler, in trust, to be sold, and the money to be divided, one half to Hannah Abbott, and the other to the members of the select society.

Out of the first money which arises from the sale of books, I bequeath to my dear sister, Martha Hall, (if alive,) forty pounds; to Mr. Creighton aforesaid, forty pounds; and to the Rev. Mr. Heath, sixty pounds.

And whereas I am empowered, by a late deed, to name the persons who are to preach in the new chapel, at London, (the clergymen for a continuance,) and by another deed, to name a committee for appointing preachers, in the new chapel at Bath, I do hereby appoint John Richardson, Thomas Coke, James Creighton, Peard Dickenson, clerks; Alexander Mather, William Thompson, Henry Moore, Andrew Blair, John Valton, Joseph Bradford, James Rogers, and William Myles, to preach in the new chapel at London, and to be the committee for appointing preachers in the new chapel at Bath.

I likewise appoint Henry Brooke, painter; Arthur Keene, gent.; and William Whitestone, stationer; all of Dublin, to receive the annuity of five pounds, (English,) left to Kingswood School, by the late Robert Shiel, Esq.

I give six pounds to be divided among the six poor men, named by the assistant, who shall carry my body to the grave; for I particularly desire there may be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of them that loved me, and are following me to Abraham's bosom. I solemnly adjure my executors, in the name of God, punctually to observe this.

Lastly, I give to each of those travelling preachers who shall remain in the Connexion six months after my decease, as a little token of my love, the eight volumes of sermons.

I appoint John Horton, George Wolff, and William Marriott, aforesaid, to be executors of this my last will and testament; for which trouble they will receive no recompence till the resurrection of the just.

Witness my hand and seal, the 20th day of February, 1789.

JOHN WESLEY. (Seal.)

Signed, sealed, and delivered, by the said testator, as and for his last will and testament in the presence of us.

WILLIAM CLULOW,
ELIZABETH CLULOW.

Should there be any part of my personal estate undisposed of by this my last will, I give the same unto my two nieces, E. Ellison and S. Collet, equally.

JOHN WESLEY.

WILLIAM CLULOW,
ELIZABETH CLULOW.

Feb. 25, 1789.

I give my types, printing-presses, and every thing pertaining thereto, to Mr. Thomas Rankin, and Mr. George Whitfield, in trust, for the use of the Conference.

JOHN WESLEY.

O, page 283.—See K, page 706.

END OF VOL. II.

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